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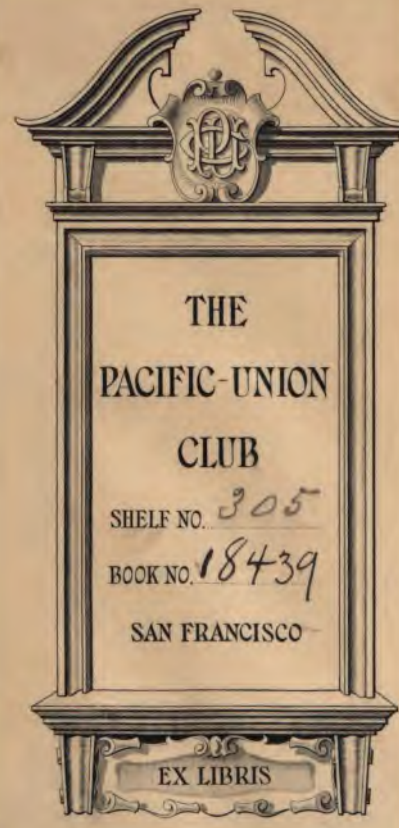

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AUTHOR OF

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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TO

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

My friend, heart-homage, in this simple strain,
I yield thee for thy toil to aid the Right!
Too long hath genius, with a guilty slight,
Passed by the thousands who life's load sustain
Of scorn and indigence, — to court the vain
And foppish crowd, — or laud, in phrases dight
With fulsome flattery, some pampered wight
Who counts himself for polished porcelain, —
The poor for vulgar clay! A nobler path, —
Disdaining hireling censure, hireling praise, —
Thou, for thyself, hast chosen. Still, in faith
That thy true toil shall hasten the boon days
Of brotherhood renewed, brother, toil on! —
All upright hearts give thee blythe benison!

ADVERTISEMENT.

WITH the exception of the last three sketches, the pieces composing these two volumes were written during the author's confinement, for "conspiracy," in Stafford gaol, merely, as a relief from the intenser thought exercised in the composition of his "Prison-Rhyme," — "The Purgatory of Suicides," — already published. Higher merit than naturalness combined with truth is not claimed for any of the stories: they are, simply, such as any man may write who has the least power of pourtraying the images which human life, in some of its humblest, least disguised forms, has impressed on his memory, — while the heart has formed no attachment sufficiently powerful to seduce the judgment into a decision, that it is either wise or honest to hide these images from the observance of others. Nearly all the homely characters sketched are real, — some of them, in their very names; and the few adventures

allotted to them, are devoid of romance and intricacy, because they seldom exceed fact.

The "*Old* Lincolnshire," so often mentioned in these simple pieces, and endeared to the writer of them by the associations of thirty years of his life, is likely soon to disappear before the social changes of that *New* Lincolnshire which railway "civilisation" will summon into existence: — would that the manufacturing-misery of the modern Leicestershire, outlined in two or three uncoloured and painfully-veritable pictures, might, as speedily, evanish!

Of the three concluding sketches, the writer feels it right to state that the first is merely a slight alteration of a series of paragraphs furnished to the *Stamford Mercury*, in 1838, and records strict facts which were then occurring in Lincolnshire; while the two remaining fragments were intended to form parts of a novel, in some degree autobiographical, — but the completion of which was relinquished, at first, from a toilful engagement with the sterner business of life, and at length from a growing preference for other subjects.

134, *Blackfriars' Road*,
London, *Nov.* 1. 1845.

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KUCKY SARSON, THE BARBER;

OR,

THE DISCIPLE OF EQUALITY.

ONCE upon a time — and that was when "French principles," as they were called, were beginning to spread in England, and here and there one began to profess admiration of the new republic, — there lived in the little town of Caistor, in North Lincolnshire, a notable barber of the name of Habakkuk Sarson,— but "Kucky" was the name by which he was familiarly known; for Lincolnshire folk are a plain folk, and don't like, nor ever did, to trouble themselves with uttering long cramp names.

It would be difficult to say how it was exactly, but somehow or other, in spite of the alarm which landowners and tenantry alike felt at the broaching of "Jacobinism,"—that *terror terrorum* to the squirearchy and farmers, — Kucky Sarson contrived to keep a fair share of custom in the matter of clipping hair

and scraping beards. Scarcely an hour of the day but Kucky had a customer; or if customers scanted, he was sure to have company for gossip. Perhaps it was chiefly owing to the frank-heartedness and real courtesy of manner which the barber mingled with his earnest speech — for he was a very great talker, and a good one too,— that he was respected by almost all who knew him, notwithstanding his open profession of the principles of "equality."

Indeed, it was a maxim of Kucky Sarson, that, "if you believed all men to be equal, you ought to treat every man like a gentleman." "That is the especial hinderance to the spread of first principles, sir," said Kucky to a customer one day. "Democrats foolishly imagine, sir, that democracy consists in barking like a bull-dog, or growling like a bear, at every man they meet; when, the fact is, that that is just the way to repel a sensible man from both yourself and your principles. Don't you think so, sir?"

Kucky's customer would have answered, but Kucky held him at that moment by the nose, and was applying a keen razor to his upper lip. The earnest shaver did not think of this, but supposed, since his customer was a stranger, that he was either modest or unacquainted with politics; and, in the latter case, Kucky was too true an enthusiast to omit the opportunity of trying to make a convert — so he resumed, after clearing his throat with a loud "a-hem!"

"If the beautiful principles of equality do not

spread, sir," he said, resolving to show his best graces of conversational style to a well-dressed stranger, "in my humble opinion, it will be chiefly attributable to the miscalculating rudeness of those who affect to advocate them. These principles, in themselves, are so self-evidently true, and so happily calculated to ensure the felicity of the human family, that it is impossible for any unprejudiced man to ——"

"Pardon me, friend," said the stranger, extricating his nose from the barber's fingers somewhat dexterously, "there may be considerable doubt about the self-evident truth of the principles you are speaking of: you seem to me to be somewhat too hasty in concluding that every one, from even a candid review of them, must acknowledge them to be incontrovertible. Give me leave to say, my good friend, that nothing will be more stoutly controverted than these same doctrines of human equality."

"Men may controvert them, sir," rejoined the barber, with some shade of an approach to asperity of manner, "but I cannot, in my conscience, give them credit for sincerity. Who was ever born into the world with a star on his breast or his shoulder, to signify that he ought to rule his fellows solely by his own will?—or who was ever created with a crook on his knee, to signify that he ought to bow down to the caprice of others? No, sir, the doctrines of equality are as clear as daylight when opposed to the darkness of slavery and mastership. In short, sir, 'Right is

every man's, but wrong is no man's right,' was a maxim of my grandfather, — and I think it settles the question."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the stranger, staring at the barber's last words, and opening his lips till the lather ran into his mouth.

"Yes, sir — I think so," repeated Kucky, striving to look as confident as before, but evidently somewhat doubtful, on second thought, of the conclusiveness of his own odd logic, — "I think so, sir; for, as I hold it to be a natural right for every man to be governed only by his own consent, so I conclude it to be wrong for any other man to attempt to rule him without first asking his will or waiting his choice. I think those two points are as clear as twice two makes four: the first is a right, and belongs to every man, and the second is a wrong that should be practised by no man. Does not my grandfather's precept mean the same thing — 'Right is every man's, but wrong is no man's right?'"

"Pardon me, my friend," replied the gentleman, unable entirely to suppress a smile, "if I say that I admire your sincerity more than your logic. Allow me further to say ——"

"Oh, allow, sir!" exclaimed the barber, bowing very low, and spreading out his hands, — "to be sure, I allow every man to judge for himself, sir. It would be extremely inconsistent in me, who claim the fullest freedom of opinion myself, to refuse others the liberty

of thought, sir. I pray you, sir, forgive me if I have been a little too positive in my manner: I will assure you, sir, I am not a bigot, — indeed, I am not ——"

"Stay, stay, my friend!" cried the stranger, puzzled and bothered with the superlative politeness of him of the razor, "if you will finish your operation upon my chin, we will have half-an-hour's talk on these subjects afterwards. In the mean time, believe me, I am happy to find you are so truly tolerant of other men's opinions: if we all cultivated that spirit, this world would speedily be much happier than it is."

"Excellent—excellent, sir!" exclaimed the honest and enthusiastic barber, resuming his shaving, but too much excited to leave his favourite theme—"you speak like a true gentleman, sir. I see we really agree, although we may seem to differ; for you have just maintained a sentiment which is purely in accordance with the principles I profess. Some great man once said, 'No man was ever born with a saddle on his back, nor was any other man brought into the world ready booted and spurred to ride him.' That was a very true and striking saying: do you recollect it, sir?"

"I recollect it, and admire it much," answered the gentleman; "but I do not just now remember whose it is."

"Nor I, sir," rejoined the garrulous barber; "but that is of little consequence, sir: truths are valuable

solely for their own weight, and not for the sake of those who utter them."

"There, again, we differ," observed the stranger. "I think that many truths are doubly valuable; — first, for their intrinsic excellence, and often, secondarily, for the sake of the great and the good men who utter them. For instance, the striking saying you have just quoted becomes, to my mind, as a passionate lover of his own country, increasedly valuable, when I remember that it is attributed to the illustrious patriot-martyr, Algernon Sydney."

"Why, sir," resumed Kucky Sarson, who was the soul of ingenuity at an argument, "the man, and the truth he utters, are very often one, essentially. Some men's lives — nay, their very deaths, — are great truths in themselves, — like the life and death of the noble commonwealthsman you have just mentioned: in such cases the man becomes so closely and entirely identified with the truths he utters, that he and they may be said to be one."

"You are now really becoming too refined for me, my friend," replied the gentleman, laughing. "But give me the pleasure of your company for a couple of hours at my inn, if you please, and I will do my best to discuss these points with you, good-humouredly and charitably, over a glass of wine."

The barber was making his politest acknowledgments, and was assuring the gentleman that he felt highly honoured and gratified by his handsome in-

vitation, when old Farmer Garbutt, a regular customer of Kucky's for more than thirty years past, although a stout "church-and-king" man, pushed his burly person in at the little shop door, and gruffly bidding the barber "good-morning," sat down in the shaving-chair, which the gentleman had just quitted. Farmer Garbutt could not have come at a moment when he was less welcome; but Kucky Sarson could not decline to shave a beard he had shorn for so long a period, and therefore politely assured the strange gentleman that he would be with him, at his inn, in the course of a quarter of an hour.

Ere the farmer's beard was cleansed, however, more than one additional chin had gathered round the chair; and what was most vexing to Kucky, in his impatient mood, was the "striking fact" that all the chins and their beards belonged to the most extreme and sturdy opposers of Kucky's republican principles to be found among his regular customers. With all his acquirement of *suave* manners, the poor barber was greatly in danger of going into a passion, as he heard, first one, and then another, allude, jeeringly, to the persecution that was commencing against Kucky's favourite doctrines. Yet he kept down the rising storm within, though with a considerable struggle: —

"Ay, ay — they'll soon hang all the levellers out o' the way, I'll warrant 'em!" said gruff Gar-

butt, rolling his eye in wicked waggery at his neighbours, and then threateningly at Kucky.

"What else can folk expect that side with cutting off kings' heads?" cried Bobby Sparrow, a dapper little master-tailor, who made and repaired habits for the parson, and all the genteel people, of Caistor and its vicinity.

"More by token — such folk as would pull down all the parish churches, and murder all the Protestants!" added old Davy Gregson, a fat little retired man of business, who liked to enjoy his joke,— sitting in a corner of the old shop, and thrusting his tongue grotesquely into his cheek, — although he was nearly fourscore.

"You will please to remember, gentlemen," interjected the barber, driven to the extremity of his temper, "that *I* am *not* an advocate either for cutting off kings' heads, or pulling down parish churches, or murdering people of any religion, much more my own."

"But ye take part with rogues that do, neighbour Kucky," said Bobby Sparrow, with provoking pertness, — "and the more's the shame to you!"

"Ay, marry, good faith — that he does!" exclaimed old Davy Gregson, enjoying the barber's apparent soreness; "and it has always been held that the abettor is as bad as the thief or the murderer!"

"If you mean to be respected, Kucky Sarson,"

growled old farmer Garbutt, "be advised, and give up all your Jacobin notions. The Squire says it would be ruin for this country to be without a king and an established church. I had a famous talk with him on all these things at the rent-day; and so he said: and if such gentlefolk as Squire Pelham don't know what belongs to good government, I should like to know who does."

"Squire Pelham's great-grandfather was of a somewhat different opinion," answered the barber: "Peregrine Pelham was his name; and he signed the death-warrant of Charles Stuart."

"The Lord be merciful to us!" exclaimed old Davy, beginning to look really alarmed — "why, that was in the time of the awful troubles that my grandmother used to talk so sorrowfully about! — Surely you don't wish that such grievous days were come again, do you, Kucky Sarson?"

"God forbid!" ejaculated farmer Garbutt, solemnly.

"You all *know* I don't, before you ask me," answered the barber, with some show of dignity. "I defy any one of you to say that there is a quieter and more upright citizen in England than I am. Who can say that I ever injured him? who dares say that I ever cheated any man of one farthing — ay, or that I owe him one? And do I ever try to compel any man to think as I think? Speak! — any one of you that can charge me with an act of wrongfulness, or a single speech of intolerance!"

"Well, well — excuse us, Kucky! We all regard you as an excellent neighbour. But you seem more short about taking a joke than usual," answered the dapper little master-tailor.

The barber merely bowed, and said, "Well, well — never mind, never mind, neighbours! we are none the worse friends for a joke." But he was conscious that he felt short-tempered, and heartily wished his customers would shorten their stay, in order that he might visit the gentleman at his inn. Agreeably to his wish, the farmer, the master-tailor, and the retired man of business each shook hands heartily with Kucky, after a few more sentences of restorative kindness, and bid him "good-day." The barber forthwith doffed his apron and fore-pocket, adjusted his neckerchief, brushed his hat, exchanged his shop-jacket for his holiday-coat, and crying "Shop, my dear!" to his wife, hurried away towards the inn, where, according to the strange gentleman's request, Kucky had promised to meet him.

To the barber's great mortification, when he arrived at the inn the gentleman had been called out, and had left word that he would be happy to receive his new acquaintance at six in the evening. Kucky Sarson felt half disposed to be unhappy with disappointment; for he feared that he would be unable to leave his shop at that busy hour of the evening. He was hastening homeward, and striving to banish this unpleasant feeling, when, passing by the end of a

narrow street or lane, he suddenly saw the strange gentleman in close conversation with a ragged, dirty-looking female, who seemed by her uncouth garb and sun-burnt complexion to belong to the wandering race of the gypsies. The barber stopped short and gazed in astonishment at what he saw. The woman bent her keen eyes upon him; but the strange gentleman seemed too much absorbed in looking at and talking to the gypsy to be aware that he was discovered.

The barber passed on to his shop, pondering much upon what he had observed. — "What in the name of prudence and propriety!" soliloquised Kucky, "can such a person have to do with a houseless outcast and vagabond of a gypsy?" The more he thought upon it, the more he wondered; till, in the course of an hour, seeing that no one stepped into the shop, he felt so exquisitely curious to know the meaning of what he had seen, that he once more doffed his apron and shop-coat, put on his holiday covering, and sallied forth again in search of the strange gentleman's secret.

Turning the first corner of the street, he suddenly ran hard against his old gossip, Davy Gregson, and nearly knocked him down in his haste.

"Hey-day, Kucky!" exclaimed Davy, "what a hurry you are in! — I reckon you are posting away to see the gentleman dance with the gypsy!"

Davy Gregson's exclamation operated like light-

ning upon the barber: he took to his heels and ran, in the direction from whence Davy came, with all the mettle he possessed. Just as he was crossing the way, however, at the end of one street with the intent to run down another, he was suddenly seized by little Bobby Sparrow, the dapper master-tailor.

"What the dickens are you running so for, Kucky?" asked the little man; "you'll be too late to see the gentleman huddle the gypsy — it's all over, and ——"

"Huddle the gypsy!" exclaimed Kucky, "I thought he was dancing with her?"

"So he was: but he fell to kissing and huddling her after that," answered Sparrow.

"For Heaven's sake let me go see," cried the barber; and bolted away again at the hazard of tearing his coat, which the tailor had kept hold of. But before he had stretched one hundred yards, he was once more stopped; and this time it was by the strong and effectual gripe of gruff farmer Garbutt.

"Art thou mad, Kucky Sarson?" asked the farmer, "or what is the reason that thou art scampering away at such a hare-brained rate?"

"The gypsy!" gasped the barber, still striving to run, — "the gypsy and the gentleman!"

"Pshaw, man! — the gentleman has suddenly found his sister who was stolen when she was young," said the farmer: "the gentleman has explained it all himself, and has taken the young woman into the

Pelham's Arms, where he puts up. I thought thou hadst had more sense, Kucky, than to run after any crowd that gathered in the street."

"Crowd!" echoed the barber, "was there a crowd then?

"A crowd!" repeated the farmer, "that was there, I assure thee. There: good-bye, Kucky!" and so saying he loosed hold of his neighbour, who was now in some degree cooled down.

Kucky Sarson did not set off to run again; but walked musingly on towards the Pelham's Arms Inn, resolved, if possible, to get at the bottom of the curious incidents just related. He was shown into the strange gentleman's room at once, when he had intimated that it would be inconvenient for him to call at six in the evening. And now the barber felt completely embarrassed, and quite ashamed of his own curiosity, in having forced himself upon the stranger so suddenly after the affecting occurrence he had just been informed of by old farmer Garbutt. In fact, Kucky had begun to stammer forth very odd apologies, and was backing out of the room with a profusion of bows and scrapes, when the gentleman rose, and leading his newly-recovered relative by the hand, introduced her to his humble visitor. Kucky Sarson recognised her face for the same he had seen in the narrow street a short time before; but the altered dress and demeanour of the female caused him to take her hand with much greater reverence than

he would have shown had that hand been offered him when he first saw its owner.

"I saw you a short time ago, when my brother had just discovered me," observed the female, as the barber took her hand.

"You did, madam," replied he, stammering with confusion, and surprised at the peculiar grace wherewith, he now thought, the gypsy conducted herself.

"No doubt you felt greatly surprised when you saw us," observed the gentleman.

"I must say I did," answered the barber, still looking very bashful.

"Did you witness any of my capers in the street, my friend? I am fearful that I have played a somewhat foolish part, for my elation well nigh drove me out of my senses. Come, my good friend," concluded the gentleman, noting the shy look of the barber, "let us sit down, and, over a comfortable glass of wine, talk over this matter;—not forgetting your family adage of 'Right is every man's, but Wrong is no man's right.'"

They were seated accordingly; and the barber, having been plied with a couple of glasses of claret, and his shame-facedness having vanished, the gentleman renewed the conversation, with a look of great good-humour.

"My good friend," said he, "I remember an observation of yours which, it strikes me, you cannot always bring to bear upon your mind with the force

of a maxim, although you profess to have made it one: it was that 'When we believe all men to be equal, we ought to treat every man like a gentleman.' Now, tell me, frankly, did you not completely forget your principles of equality at the moment you saw me with this my beloved and only sister, in the guise of a vagabond gypsy?" The gentleman took the hand of his recovered relative once more in his own, and they looked with joy and love upon each other.

The barber felt conscience-stricken with the inconsistency between his philosophy and his practice, in this notable instance, and, despite his natural loquacity, remained dumb.

"Nay, my good friend," resumed the stranger; "do not think yourself unlike other people. Let me see you rally, and display the spirit you did this morning: all the world is too prone to fail in the act of applying principles and professions to practice."

"I do, indeed, feel," said the barber at length, but still hanging down his head, "that I have *not* felt and acted as a disciple of the great doctrine of equality ought to have felt and acted this day."

"And I think you will not fail to draw this great lesson from your own experience, my friend," rejoined the gentleman, "that, however intrinsically true it may be that we are all equal in the eye of Him who made us, yet our birth, our early associations, our habits,—in brief, the whole complexity of circumstances with which we are every hour, nay, every

moment, surrounded, renders it absolutely impossible for any of us to act at all times, or even generally, upon the conviction of that most undeniable and solemn truth."

"You are perfectly right, sir," replied the barber, conscious that the stranger spoke the language of common sense, and feeling humbled into willing discipleship.

"And, granting the doctrine of equality to be strictly true," continued the gentleman, "yet how long, how very long must it be, ere the race of mankind shall be able to throw off their prejudices,—their present artificial condition, shall we call it?—so completely as to reinduce and reinstate that universal equality we have just agreed to be natural."

"Very sensible, sir," interjected Kucky Sarson; "but I am just thinking," he added, feeling some return of his usual confidence, "that equality never will be reinstated, unless we spread its great doctrines by all the means in our power. Equality must be enuntiated, maintained, and defended, sir; or, like other truths which have lain hid for ages, it will not produce any fruit."

"True, my good friend," answered the gentleman; "but permit me to remind you that practice is more powerful than precept. If we each sought to act towards our fellow-creatures as if they were really our brethren and sisters, the principles of a true equality would soon gain a citadel in each human

heart. It is the putting into practice of this deep conviction of our common brotherhood which is really most worthy of our endeavours. We may contend against the artificial distinctions which are established among men till doomsday; but if we do not, on all occasions, display brotherly feeling towards our fellows, our contention will produce no salutary effect."

"Indeed, sir," said the barber, "I feel you are by far the more consistent philosopher of the two——"

"Nay," said the gentleman, cutting short the barber's strain of intended panegyric; "I would not have you suppose that I am a perfect practiser of the maxims I am recommending. I never yet found a man who fulfilled his own definition of a philanthropist, a patriot, or a philosopher, — that is, if his definition were worthy of being termed one. I only press this fact upon your notice, my friend: that I was once in the habit of talking as loudly about equality as yourself, — nay, even dogmatically about it, and that is *not* like your way of talking; but I have ceased to talk about the name, and am now endeavouring to spread the spirit of it. I try to do all the good I can, to make every one as happy as I can, to banish all the misery I can. I cannot always keep in mind that every human being I meet is my brother or sister; for the force of old habit is such that a pernicious aristocracy moves within me sometimes, but I try to keep it down. My friend, I am preaching *to* you, rather than conversing *with* you;

but we will now leave this subject for some lighter theme, if you please; only permit me to say, in conclusion, that you must never believe yourself to be a thorough disciple of Equality while a grain of offence arises in your mind on seeing a gentleman converse with a gypsy."

It would be tiresome to pursue any further the conversation of the barber and the strange gentleman. Suffice it to say that Kucky Sarson was an altered man from that day, though he never saw the gentleman again. He subdued the habit of expressing his convictions in terms which he knew must give offence and create prejudice, rather than advance truth, couch them as courteously as he might in the flourish of politeness. He turned his efforts, in the humble sphere of his conventional existence, rather towards preparing the world for rigid truth, than towards impelling the people into the acknowledgment and practice of principles of which they had not as yet learned the alphabet. These changes, to Kucky Sarson's honour be it spoken, came over his spirit, not through cowardice, — for he possessed enough of strength of mind and principle to have braved a prison, had he thought his lot cast in the fitting and becoming time: it was honest conviction which acted as a mollifier of Kucky's manners, and the usefulness of the change in him was evidenced by the greater good he effected in his modified character. He preserved his grandfather's favourite saying to the last day of his life;

and, as no one sought more ardently to fulfil the character of an humble philanthropist, — to alleviate distress wherever he found it, — to soften and dissipate asperity of temper, and to create the genuine feeling of brotherhood, and the practice of self-sacrifice among all men, — so his name and favourite adage were remembered after his death; insomuch that when a word tending to difference arose among the plain inhabitants of Caistor-in-Lindsey, it was usually succeeded, and the difference prevented, by some one observing, "Why, neighbours, what's the use of wrangling? You know what good Kucky Sarson used to say, — 'Right is every man's, and Wrong is no man's right.'"

RAVEN DICK, THE POACHER;

OR,

"WHO SCRATCHED THE BULL?"

KIAH DOBSON, — they always called him Kiah "for shortness sake," as we used to say in Lincolnshire; but his full name was Hezekiah, — Kiah Dobson was a hearty buck of a farmer, who ploughed about fifty acres, and fed sheep and bullocks on about fifty others. He was a tenant of good old Squire Anderson, the ancestor of the Yarboroughs, who are called Lords in these new-fashioned times. Lindsey and its largest landlord presented, it need scarcely be said, very different features sixty years ago to those they present now. Squire Anderson kept a coach, but he had not three or four, like his successor, the peer: he had one good house at Manby, but he had not that and a much grander one at Brocklesby, another at Appuldercome, in the Isle of Wight, and another in town.

The farmers of Lindsey kept each a good nag, for market service, and so forth; but it was a very, very scarce thing to find a blood horse in their stables; and when their dames went to market, it was on the pillion-seat, behind the farmer himself, and not in the modern kickshaw gig. There were none of your strongholds of starvation, which the famishing thousands call "Bastiles," in those days; and a horn of good humming ale, and a motherly slice of bread and cheese, awaited the acceptance of any poor man who happened to be journeying, and called either at the hall of the squire or at the cottages of any of the farmers on his extensive estates.

Kiah Dobson was nearing his cottage one November evening, a little before dusk, when a figure caught his eye, the sight of which roused his gall, — and yet Kiah was by no means a choleric or hasty-tempered man. It was Raven Dick, the poacher, that the farmer was so wroth to see; for Dick was beheld as the farmer had beheld him nearly fifty times before, — with a bundle of dead hares under his arm. The farmer turned to cross the home-close in another direction, willing, as it seemed, to give Dick another fair opportunity of getting safely away. But "the devil was in Dick for impudence," as Kiah used often to say, — "if you gave him an inch, he would be sure to take an ell!" Not content with imposing on farmer Dobson's good-nature forty-nine times in the course of his harum-scarum life, he must e'en "try it

on" for the fiftieth, and so made the experiment just once too often.

"Farmer! how d'ye feel yoursen?" said Dick, striding up to Kiah Dobson, and looking him full in the face, as bold as a bull-dog.

"Better than thou'lt feel, scapegrace! when thou gets thy hempen collar on!" replied the farmer, snarling as angrily as a mastiff when he doesn't like you.

"May be the thread of it isn't spun yet," retorted Dick, mocking the farmer's angry tone.

"Surely, old Nick himself isn't more impudent than his children that wear his own colour!" exclaimed Kiah, darting a withering look at Dick's black face, for Dick's skin was even swarthier than a gypsy's; and I might as well say now as at any other time, that the sable shade of Dick's countenance, coupled with their knowledge of his wild way of life, were the emphatic reasons why his neighbours gave him the epithet of "Raven."

Now, above all things, Dick did not like these reflections on his unfair colour; so, with something in the shape of an oath, Dick turned his heel in dudgeon, and seemed, not at all to the farmer's displeasure, to be bent on making his way home.

Dame Dobson, who was a stout country-wife, and was labouring lustily at her churn, and scolding one of her maids, who had been idling, just as her husband entered the cottage, caught a sight of the well-

known poacher with the hares under his arm ere the farmer could close the door, and, with the anger that her maid had kindled, was ill prepared to brook new provocation.

"Shame on thee, Kiah, for letting that rascal escape so often!" she exclaimed, screaming so loudly that Dick could hear her words distinctly, though nearly half way over the close; "it will come to the Squire's ears at long-last, thou may depend on't! and then thou knowst what will follow!"

"Hang the villain!" said Kiah, "he really deserves nabbing; and I've half a mind to go after him and collar him; for, confound him! he grows more brazenly impudent than a miller's horse! he's getting worse than come-out!"

"You'll ha' no need to do that," said the incorrigibly idle maiden, who had gone to the window to peep at the poacher, in spite of her mistress's fierce scolding, "he's turned again, and has been listening to you, and now he's coming hither as fast as shanks' horse can carry him!"

And so it was, for Dick had changed his intent; and, with a perverse will, now strode, at full stretch, towards the door of the farm house.

"Curse his gallows-neck!" exclaimed farmer Dobson, between his teeth, when he heard the maiden's words: "has he such a brass-face as that comes to? I'll nab him this time, or I'm a Dutchman else!"

Raven Dick's foot was on the grunsel almost

before the farmer had finished this last sentence; and throwing himself on a chair in the kitchen, and the hares on the cottage floor, alike with the air and impudence of one who braves the gallows, he asked for a horn of ale and a lump of bread and cheese with as little ceremony as if he had been a squire in his own mansion. Dick's audacity, however, had now overstretched its mark. The farmer's strong fist was on Dick's frock collar in a moment; the next, the farmer had dragged him from his seat; and, in the third, Dick was prostrate on the cottage floor. Unluckily, Kiah Dobson's anger overbalanced his caution; and, with the impetuosity of his own force upon the poacher, Kiah brought himself, also, to the floor.

Dick had so long careered it over the farmer's fields, by day and by night, and had so often "snickled," or noosed the hares, as one may say, under the farmer's nose, and the farmer had all the while taken it so mildly, that the poacher was never more surprised in his life than at this portentous assault upon his person by mild, good-natured Kiah Dobson. Had it not been for his imaginary security of feeling, the poacher would not so easily have been overthrown. And, as it was, Dick was not disposed to believe that all was over with him; he speedily succeeded in wriggling his body from under the farmer's weight, and, in the course of a few minutes, had his knee upon Kiah's breast, and began to grab the farmer so tightly by the throat that he soon grew blacker than

Dick himself. Luckily Dame Dobson's churn staff came to the rescue. She pommelled the hard head of the poacher so soundly, and her strokes came so thick and fast after each other, that he was compelled to loose his hold on the farmer's throat, in order to catch the churn-staff from the farmer's wife. The engagement, however, now became more furious. Poor Kiah lay gasping on the floor, for some moments, unable to rise, much less to aim a blow at the adversary; but the war was at its height between Raven Dick and the dame, and two stout maidens of her service. Mops, brooms, and brushes were successively impelled with no playful force towards the seasoned skull of the poacher, but were shivered with the rapidity of lightning, as he dexterously caught hold of them, and wrested them from the hands of his clamorous assailants. The din of female tongues was scarcely less than the noise of blows; and when the more effective ammunition was all expended, the discharge was confined, at last, to the small shot of epithets, poured in every imaginable shape, from the fair musketry of the three female belligerents' mouths.

The scene had now become as laughable as previously it had been serious. Raven Dick stood on a chair in the middle of the floor, drawing his face into the most whimsical forms and mocking the women, while they stood around him, each with hands on hip, and tearing their throats with the effort to abuse and

irritate, or otherwise to shame him. The farmer, seeing what turn the war had taken, had seated himself on a chair, and forgetting his anger, was shaking his sides with laughter at the ludicrous and unwonted scene presented that night in his kitchen. The affray at length shrank into silence; the women's tongues were fairly wearied; they each sat down to rest; and so Dick sat down, likewise.

"Dang it Dick, thou'rt a good woolled 'un!" said the hearty farmer; "but thou art an idle rogue, after all."

"How so, Maister Kiah?" asked the saucy poacher; "why do you call me an idle rogue?"

"Because thou art fonder of stealing than working," quickly replied the farmer.

"Stealing, say you?" rejoined Dick, his brows knitting together; "I scorn your words, Kiah Dobson! — You lie in your throat! — What do I steal?"

"The 'squire's hares, by dozens, thou saucy varlet," answered Kiah.

"How come they to be the 'squire's hares?" asked Dick, fixing his eyes very keenly on the farmer.

"By feeding and breeding on his land," answered Kiah Dobson.

"But dont *you* plough the land, Farmer Dobson?"

"To be sure I do ——"

"And don't *you* buy the seed to sow upon the land?"

"Sartainly I do ——"

"And don't *you* sow the seed when you have bought it?"

"Ay, and I can sow a breadth with here and there a fellow in any ——"

"Pshaw! — don't *you* watch the corn while it is growing, weed it, and attend to it till it is ripe? and do not *you*, with the sweat of your own brow, and the help of those you hire with your own purse, reap the corn, and gather it into the stack-yard? — and don't *you*, afterwards, pay many a shilling in wages for Roger Brown, and Tim Wilson, and others, to thrash your corn for you? — and don't you consider the corn *yours* when you are taking it to market? — and don't you think *you* have a right to receive the money for which you sell it?"

"Ay, and I would fain be knowing, Dick, who besides has so good a right to it as I have," replied the farmer, starting to his feet with warmth, and not apprehending the drift of Dick's queries.

"Then the corn which these poor hares have eaten during the summer," said Dick, pointing to the dead animals which lay on the floor, "was *your* corn, and *not* the 'squire's, for you pay him his rent, don't you, Kiah?"

"Zounds, ay! to the very day," instantly and proudly replied the farmer.

"And yet *you* durst not kill a hare, and be seen in doing it," said Dick, not permitting a moment's pause to take place.

"Me kill a hare!" exclaimed Kiah, scratching his head, and colouring very deeply; "Lord! you know, Dick, I've no licence; and, besides, the 'squire always reckons the hares his own, you know."

"Does he?" said Dick, with a peculiar sneer, "then he's a fool for so doing. — Why, Farmer Dobson, don't you remember how, last latter-end, three persons came from Lincoln, and went shooting like wild devils over the whole estate, murdering and bagging all they could see? And it's more than likely you'll have a greater number of the Lincoln Minster Jackdaws, as the 'squire called 'em, this month than you had last November; and will the 'squire be such a fool as to call the hares his own then, when the black thieves are packing off with them, think you?"

"Dang it! thou talks very odd, Dick!" said the farmer, sitting down very quietly, fixing his eyes on the floor, and scratching his head harder than before; "thou talks very odd, but what thou say'st is as true as the gospel, for all that."

"That it is, as sure as eggs are eggs," added the dame, into whose mind conviction had been entering a little more quickly than into that of her husband.

"There now!" exclaimed Dick, springing from his seat, and feeling proud of the power of his argu-

mentation, when he saw both the farmer and his wife brought over so triumphantly to his side of the question. "There now, you see, Kiah Dobson, a man may be judged very wrongly, and be condemned for a thief and a rogue by many who are either — saving your presence, farmer — thorough fools or rogues themselves, and yet, all the while, he may be quite as honest as his neighbours. Now, don't you think it hard, Kiah, under all the circumstances, that *you* are not allowed to kill a hare when you like?"

"I'm not thinking so much about that," replied Farmer Dobson, his eyes still bent very thoughtfully downward — "I'm not thinking so much about that, as I am wondering how, in the name of Old Nick, these things came to be as they are. You see, Dick, it was the same in my father's time, though I've heard him say that my grandfather used to tell how, in the time of the great troubles, folks killed game when and where they liked; but that was only owing to the unsettled state of things, for these laws about the game were made before that time I take it, Dick."

"According to what I've learned about it," said Dick, looking still more proud than before, and feeling himself superior in information to the rest of the company, "these Game Laws, as they are called, began with William the Conqueror, the king that I dare say you've heard of, farmer, that came from

beyond the sea, and got possession of this country, when ——"

"Likely, likely," said the farmer, yawning, and growing wearied of Dick's learning; "I don't care two straws who first made such laws, Dick; but I'm sure of one thing — that it must be wrong, when one thinks on it, that the great folk should claim the wild creatures God Almighty makes himself as their own, when, all the while, they have no more right to 'em than other folk."

"To be sure it's wrong, farmer," said Dick. "What right could any man have, whether he were a king, or a 'squire, or a parson, to say to all the people of this country, or any other country, 'You shall none of you kill a stag, or a hare, or a pheasant, under pain of losing a hand, or going to prison?' The only wonder is, farmer, that people have submitted to these laws so long and so quietly."

"Why, you see, Dick," continued the farmer, whose common sense was of a more solid character than Dick's, though his perceptions were not quite so acute at the outset of an enquiry — "you see, Dick, this law is contrived, like most other laws, to draw a number of folk into the love and the liking of it: it isn't simply *one* man *now*, whatever it might have been formerly, that is interested in keeping up these Game Laws. Rich folks generally think they ought to do no other but uphold 'em. They say, that all the game would soon be destroyed if every body was

allowed to kill hares and pheasants when and where they like. The 'squire, too, sends presents, you know, to his acquaintances the great folk in London, and elsewhere; and if hares and pheasants and partridges were as common with poor folk as with rich, why, the great folk would soon scorn to have 'em on their tables. 'There are wheels within wheels,' as the miller says, Dick. Rich folk are sure to hang together on their side of the wheat-sack; and that is the reason — more than their money, Dick, mind ye! more than their money — why they are so much more powerful than the poor. And for the self-same reason that they *are* so powerful, Dick," concluded the farmer, seeming determined to finish his speech in spite of the poacher's evident dislike to it, "I think it is far better for all who love peace and quietness, and a whole skin, to keep out of harm's way. You understand me, Dick! Come, dame, fill us a good jug of ale, and let us have a bit of bread and cheese, or a mouthful of bacon, and Dick and I will talk these things over a bit, just in a quiet and sensible way."

The dame hasted to set her hospitality before her spouse and the poacher; and it soon became hard to say which most excelled in the act of doing justice to it. The strong ale, however, was most freely partaken by the poacher, and, under its potency, Dick's tongue soon began to indulge itself with a tolerably large licence.

"I' faith, farmer," he said, "you gave me a roughish reception when I crossed your threshold; you must do things gentlier another time, when you're disposed for a cramp: it's only a fool-hardy sort of a thing to take a bull by the horns: it's ten times wiser, when he makes a butt at you, to scratch him a bit, and coax him, and smooth him down."

The farmer was a little nettled by Raven Dick's taunting tone and the devilry of his eye; but he thought one scuffle enough for a day, and so replied with a somewhat forced look of good humour, "I hardly think it's wisest at all times, Dick. I think, for my own part, the only way sometimes is to take a bull by the horns. And besides, Dick, whoever heard o' such a thing as scratching a bull? You may scratch an angry cur, you know, Dick," he concluded with a laugh, "but a bull!—no, no, Dick, scratching a bull won't do at all!"

"I know what I say, Farmer Dobson," cried Dick aloud, thumping one hand upon the table, and pouring the ale on the outside of the horn, instead of into it, with the other, "I know what I say,—and I say *scratching!*"

"Speak in the house, Dick!" retorted the farmer, colouring, "thou wilt not talk better sense for shouting. I tell thee that that bull's only a fool of a bull that will stand scratching! Wilt thou make me believe, think'st thou, that any body would be such a goose, for instance, as to try to scratch my old white bull

in the second home close? Thou won't venture to scratch him, I'm pretty sartain, Dick, with all thy brag and bluster to boot!"

"Won't I?" cried Dick, fiercely; "why, what do ye fancy is to hinder me, eh! old clod-pate?"

"Dick, Dick!" said the farmer, cooling himself with the remembrance that the poacher was a much younger and inexperienced man than himself, and tapping the wild youth admonishingly on the shoulder, "it is far wiser for a man to go steadily about getting his bread, than either to scratch bulls, or to snickle hares, depend on't. I don't say but that you have as much right to practise one as t'other, if you feel inclined; only, you are almost sure to repent it in the end, in either case: you understand me, Dick?"

"'Od dang it!" hiccupped Dick, setting his ragged hat on one side, and looking at the farmer as if he intended him to understand he was no ordinary hero, "do ye think, Kiah Dobson, that I fear aught that may happen? I say I *will scratch* your bull; ay, and I'll tame him, too, as I've tamed you?"

"Better not," replied the farmer drily; "better go quietly home, Dick, and try to earn thy living honestly, like thy father and thy brother Ned."

"To Jericho with 'em both!" roared Raven Dick, bouncing up from his seat: "they're fools both of 'em! I don't intend to slave for ever, and never have any fun, like them. No, no! I'll have a hare when I like; ay, and I'll scratch a bull when I like, too!

— so here goes!" and out sallied the intoxicated poacher, snatching up the dead hares as he went, and placing them under his arm as before. Farmer Dobson and the dame followed, for their curiosity was, naturally, too highly excited to permit their remaining behind.

Just as Dick vaulted over the first hedge, for he was in too heroic a vein to think of taking the stile, though it was close by, Dick met one who was no stranger to him. It was the squire's gamekeeper. The moon shone brightly, and the gamekeeper looked hard at Dick, and still harder at the hares under his arm. But although the gamekeeper had his gun with him as usual, he most likely felt unwilling to encounter one so strong, and withal so reckless as he knew Raven Dick to be, for he did not speak to him. Dick spoke to the gamekeeper, notwithstanding.

"Heigho!" said he, "brother poacher! how are you for fun? just stop and look at me, while I scratch Kiah Dobson's old bull, will ye?" and off he went along the hedge-row in quest of his new game, while the gamekeeper and the farmer and his wife stood gazing after him in astonishment.

Scarcely sooner said than done! Dick came up to the bull as he lay in the pasture, quietly and unsuspectingly chewing the cud, and Dick began to scratch the bull. It need hardly be said that if Dick thought this very funny, the horned beast's thoughts were of

another complexion. The bull rose, blurred, and ran bang upon Dick, goring his ribs, throwing him up, and, bounding to the other side of the field, left the scratcher senseless upon the grass, and all before you could have found breath to say, "Jack Robinson!" had you been looking on, like the gamekeeper and farmer and dame Dobson.

Nothing in the wide world could have given the gamekeeper greater pleasure than Dick's overthrow. "Farmer Dobson," said he, "now is the time to nab the rascal: fetch your wheelbarrow, and we'll put him into it, and take him away to the next constable's, and he shall put him into the close-hole, till justice can be had upon him: it will do the Squire's heart good, I'm sure, to learn that we have noosed the Raven at last, after he has noosed so many score brace o' game."

Kiah Dobson's heart felt reluctant to assist in imprisoning Dick, 'scapegrace, although he knew him to be: but how could he refuse compliance with the request of the squire's gamekeeper, for there lay the hares by the poacher's side? Besides, as Kiah often used to say, when he related the story in after years, he reflected that although Dick was so good a logician on the evils of the Game Laws, yet he had become so outrageously daring in bidding defiance to danger, that he feared ill would come on it, if a timely check were not given to his course. So Kiah went and

fetched the barrow, and he and the gamekeeper lifted Dick into it, and away they wheeled him to the next constable's house. A surgeon attended to Dick's wounds, when he had brought him to his senses a little; and, the next week, the squire himself, sitting in judicial state at the hall of Manby, committed Dick to the House of Correction for six months.

Dick found the labour of knocking hemp — the usual employ of prisoners in the gaols of North Lincolnshire at that period — to be but pitiful "fun." And when he reflected that he would be likely to come there again, or to some worse place, if he ever afterwards ventured to renew his practice of "snickling" hares, he steadily resolved to "work like his father and his brother Ned," as Farmer Dobson advised. Dick's views on the Game Laws never altered; but he felt, after this sorrowful experience, it would be worse than folly to dream of violating them with impunity, in a country where "the rich all hung together on their own side of the wheat sack," as Kiah Dobson had observed. Now and then, when he happened to have shaken hands too freely with his old acquaintance Sir John Barleycorn, even years after his imprisonment, Raven Dick would be liable to relapse into some shade of his old feeling, and putting on a "gallows-look," as the landlord of the Harrows and Plough, in Froddingham, used to call it, he would threaten to return

to his old trade. But there was one saying which, when "passed about" on the long settle of the public-house, was always sure to raise a hearty chorus of laughter at Dick's expense, and to have the effect of dispelling, in a twinkling, all Dick's dreams of having more "fun:" it was — "Who scratched the Bull?"

TIM SWALLOW-WHISTLE, THE TAILOR;

OR,

"EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY."

TIM SWALLOW-WHISTLE, the tailor, lived at Horncastle, a thriving little agricultural town in the centre of Lincolnshire, and now well-known even to the verge of Europe for its prodigious yearly horse fair, to which Russ and Pruss, Netherlander and Austrian, Frenchman, Swiss, and Italian, with even, at times, the turban'd Turk, may be beheld flocking to purchase from the rare show of steeds: "but let that pass!" Tim was not one of your fashionable tailors, it is true, but he was reckoned an "uncommon neat hand" at his trade. Indeed, old Cocky Davy, who was a very emperor among the Lincolnshire tailors, always declared Tim to be the cleverest apprentice that ever received his indentures at his hands. Old Cocky — he was so termed on account of the particular loftiness of his carriage — Old Cocky had one especial maxim; it was, "Strike your needle dead, you dog; and make your thread cry

'twang!'" — and no one apprentice that ever sat upon Davy's shop-board so fully gratified his master by the gallant and complete style in which he fulfilled this maxim, as did Tim Swallow-whistle. Cocky Davy was often heard to say — ay, and to swear it too, when in his cups — that it did his heart good to see the masterly manner in which Tim used to strike the cloth. And then, for finishing a button-hole, "Good heavens!" — Cocky Davy would declare in the White Swan parlour, when the clock was on the stroke of twelve — "why, Tim could turn the thing off his fingers with every cast of the thread as regular and exact as if he had worked it by geometry;" and then Cocky would thump his pewter tankard with vehement force upon mine host's white wooden table, and call to have it re-filled for the last time that night.

It may easily be guessed that Tim Swallow-whistle was not only a clever hand, but a hard-working lad, while an apprentice, or otherwise he would not have worn such excelling commendations from a master who was quite as frequently found in the parlour of the White Swan as in his own shop, and therefore found it of incalculable value to himself to possess an apprentice who would work hard while his master played. Now, as a loitering apprentice usually makes a worthless, idle man, so a diligent lad is almost invariably found to carry his early habits of industry into mature life, and to make a stirring and prosper-

ous citizen, unless some untoward circumstances arise to bereave him of the power for exertion, or to deprive him of its legitimate and well-deserved fruits.

Tim Swallow-whistle did not belie the promise of his youth. He was full forty years old when the incidents occurred we are about to relate; and up to that time, as he used himself to say, "Nobody could ever say he had an idle bone in his skin." But, let a man be as industrious and well-disposed as he may, ten to one but somebody or other in this crooked world will be found determined to find fault with him. So it was with Tim: he "minded his own business" most emphatically; for he was regularly found on his shop-board every morning, winter or summer, as the clock struck five; and he seldom quitted it before seven at night, unless on some special holiday occasion: he "paid every one their own" — that is to say, he kept no scores, either at the baker's, the butcher's, the grocer's, or at the alehouse: he had a whole coat on his back — though there was, here and there, a patch in it of his own neatest style of repair: and, to conclude the catalogue of his competency in his own language, "he had always something to eat when other folk went to dinner."

Tim contrived to keep up to this standard of comparative comfort, too, in spite of a breeding wife, who had stocked his cottage with nine "small children," though he was not married till he was thirty. With

so many excellences, who could have thought that any one would be bad enough to attempt to mar Tim's well-earned happiness? But the world is, what we have just termed it, a crooked world; and so poor Tim was doomed to meet with undeserved annoyance.

Just opposite Tim's little shop lived a great professor of sour-godliness. Unluckily, he was not only of the same homely trade with Tim, but was enabled to hold up his head more loftily among his fellow-tradesmen, by reason that a maiden aunt happened to die and leave him a neat little freehold that brought him in 50*l.* a-year, in addition to his earnings by the shears, needle, and thimble. Jedediah Prim — for so was this fortunate tailor called — was adjudged by his neighbours to be ill-disposed towards his poorer brother snip, solely because Tim had always sufficient employ for himself and an apprentice, whereas Prim's manners were so uninviting, and his character so mean, that he barely ensured occupation for his own solitary needle.

Since Prim, at heart, was a worshipper of Mammon above all other gods, it was not at all wonderful that he felt envious at his neighbour's trade. Nevertheless, Prim ever affected the greatest scorn of these neighbourly charges of avarice and envy, and most piously averred that he had no other distaste to "the man over the way," as he called Tim, than that which was created in his soul by "the ungodly man's pro-

faneness!" "He is every day selling his soul to Satan by the whistling of the Evil One's own tunes!" was Prim's godly lamentation over the evil ways of his neighbour. This was a severe hit at the only kind of recreation in which poor Tim indulged. He had been a hard whistler, as well as a hard worker, from a lad; and from the peculiarity of his way of whistling, which very much resembled an endless twitter, Tim caught the curious *soubriquet* of "Swallow-whistle" among his fellow-apprentices at Cocky Davy's, and kept it to his dying day.

Now, whistling or twittering are but very humble kinds of melody, but I care not however lowly or merely imitative may be the degree of the divine faculty of music that a human creature may be endowed with, I'll warrant him, there will be something like real nobility of heart or mind about him, let his vocation and whereabouts in this ill-arranged world be what it may. And truly, so much might, without hesitancy, be affirmed of twittering Tim the tailor of Horncastle. With all his knowledge of the ill-will borne towards him by Prim the puritan, Tim Swallow-whistle would have sprung off his shop-board like a bounding fawn, and with a bounding heart of joy, to have done the envious Jedediah a good turn. Yet, with all his bountiful good-nature, Tim possessed a fair share of shrewdness. He had lived long enough to learn that over-weening envy usually overshoots its mark, and most severely punishes its own volun-

tary slaves. Thus, of all men in the little town of Horncastle, Tim Swallow-whistle was least disturbed at what every one talked of as a scandalous matter, namely, the envy and malevolence of Jedediah Prim, the religious tailor. "Never mind; 'every dog has his day!'" Tim would reply, and twitter away again, to every successive tale his neighbours brought him, about what Prim said, and what Prim did: for you never knew of two neighbours being "at outs" in your life, but a host of voluntary messengers, on either side, could be found to fetch and carry fuel to maintain the heat between them.

What moved Tim Swallow-whistle more than any other event in his life was the fact of Prim the puritan being made overseer of the poor, and throwing Tim's poor old grandmother entirely upon his maintenance. The aged woman had nearly reached a century of years; and, at the mere cost of half-a-crown per week to the parish, was nursed in her second childhood by Tim's widowed mother, who lived in a little cottage, hard by her son. Tim had willingly, nay eagerly, contributed to supply the wants of the two aged women through all the difficulties felt by a man situated as he was, with an increasing family, for there was not a grain of sordidness in his noble nature; but it was no joke for poor Tim to have the entire weight of the burthen cast upon him. For several days after the announcement was formally made him — and pious Prim took care

to have the devilish satisfaction of performing the annoying business himself — poor Tim suspended his twittering, and "struck his needle dead" in a savage mood of reflection. Tim's reflection ended, however, in the way that, with such a heart, it was natural for it to end, — in the manly resolve that he would work the very skin off his fingers, and go without a meal every day in the week, rather than permit his old grandmother to want. "Every dog has his day!" echoed Tim, recovering his wonted elasticity of spirits; "Jedediah Prim will not be overseer of the poor for the parish of Horncastle to all eternity;" and away he burst into a mellifluous twitter that floated, in the form of "Merrily danced the Quakers," gaily across the street, and entered into the very "porches of the ears" of Prim the puritan, much to the deadly annoyancc of that heart of envy. During the continuance of Tim's overture for the day, there entered into his cottage a travelling tinker, who besought leave of the tailor to light his pipe.

"Ay, lad, and welcome," blithely answered Tim; and away he went twittering his old burthen of "Merrily danced the Quakers."

"Marry, good faith, maister!" said the tinker, folding his arms and looking as if he felt inclined for 'a bit of chat,' as they say in Lincolnshire; "why, that was the very tune my poor old mother was so fond of! I can't help feeling fond on't, d'ye know, maister; for my mother was a good mother to me —

the Lord rest her soul!" and the hardy tinker's voice faltered in a way that showed his heart had its tender place, notwithstanding his rough exterior. Tim's twittering was arrested; the tinker had touched him on a tender chord, and his whole heart vibrated, sympathetically.

"Sit you down a while, friend, and smoke your pipe quietly," said Tim, pointing to a seat near his shop-board; "I'll tell our Becky to get out the copper kettle for you to mend as soon as she comes down stairs; we haven't used it these three years for want o'mending."

"And times have been too hard for you to have it mended before, I reckon, maister," said the tinker.

"Nay, as for that," replied Tim with a smile and a shake of the head, "they're not much mended now; I find it to be only a cross-grained world, I'll assure you, friend; but I always make it a maxim to take things as easy as I can; for, as I always say, 'Every dog has his day,' and among the rest of the poor dogs one doesn't know but one's own turn to have a day may come yet."

"Right, maister, right! ejaculated the tinker, drawing a full breath at his pipe, and puffing out a full cloud of satisfaction; "there's sartainly a comfort in thinking so: yet it isn't a pleasing thing to be striving to do one's best, and to pay every one their own, and yet to be trampled upon, as poor folks too commonly are in this world."

"Very true, friend," chimed in Tim Swallow-whistle, assenting readily to a remark that reminded him so strikingly of his own experience; "very true: there's nothing that gives an honest man any uneasiness equal to that: for my part, I've no wish to be richer or loftier than my neighbours; but I must say the man must feel it hard who's ill-used, after striving to do the best he can for everybody as well as himself."

"Well, you see, maister, it shows that what the Scripter says is true, 'that money is the root of all evil,'" rejoined the tinker; "for you'll always observe that a man begins to trample upon you as soon as he happens to begin to get on in the world a little better than yourself."

"'Tis too often the case, friend," said Tim, not fully approving of the tinker's sweeping remark, but still feeling the forceful truth of it in his own case; "and yet I can't understand how it should be so."

"At any rate, maister," said the tinker, interrupting the other, "one can understand one thing: that if things could be put more on a level in this world, there wouldn't be such foul dealings as we see now; for if one man wasn't allowed to be so much stronger in the pocket than another, all men would be more likely to gain respect; all this bowing and scraping of poor to rich would be at an end, I mean."

"Why, yes," interjected the tailor, stopping his needle when it was but half way through the cloth

and feeling a disposition to be abstracted; "that's true enough — true enough, friend: but for my part I don't see how the vast difference between the rich and the poor is to be remedied. You see it's the nat'ral course of things: some folk are idle, and others unlucky; while money makes money, when a man once gets hold on't — that is, if he tries to turn it over, and takes care of it as it gathers."

"Just so, maister; that's all very true as far as it goes," rejoined the tinker; "but I think that's not exactly what the parson calls the end o' the chapter. I'm but a plain man, and no great scholar; but I always take Brimmijem and Sheffield in my yearly round, and one hears a bit o' long headed-talk, maister, now and then in such places: you'll excuse me if I tell you a little of what I think about these things."

"Prythee, don't mention that, in that sort of a way," said Tim, hastily; "I'll assure thee that there's nobody likes a man that speaks his mind better than I do."

"Thank ye, maister," continued the tinker; "then I'll tell you what I think: I think there ought to be a law to compel folk that make money so fast to use it in making their fellow-creatures happy, instead of spending it on finery and foolishness."

"Why, you would make folks kind and good by law then, friend! Hum! I can't see," disputed Tim, again suspending his needle, and looking very

metaphysically upon the corner pane of his shop window, "I can't see how that scheme would be likely to succeed. Excuse me, friend, but I think you are talking about may-be's that'll never fly."

"Look ye, now, maister," resumed the tinker, laying down his pipe, raising his hand with the fore-finger pointed, and looking greatly in earnest to substantiate his theory; "this is my point: God Almighty made us all of the same flesh and blood, not some of china and the rest of brown marl: he made us to live like brothers; and if one had better wit than the rest, it was his duty to use it for the benefit of all his brothers and sisters, as well as for his own benefit. So, if a man by money makes money, since he can't do that without the help of other folk, I maintain that that money ought to be distributed, and all that it will buy, for the benefit of all, but more especially for the comfort of those whom the money-maker made use of in making his money."

"You mean, if I understand you," said Tim Swallow-whistle, looking as much like a logician as he knew how, in order to keep the tinker in countenance — "you mean, my friend, that when men with full pockets employ men with empty ones, and by the labour of the poor make their full pockets flow over, there ought to be a fairer division of the profit."

"That's exactly what I mean, maister," answered

the tinker, smiling with enthusiasm, "you have hit the nail on the head, completely: I think there ought to be a law, ay, and I think it's more needed than any other law, to prevent the rich from employing the poor just for what wages they please, and to so order things that every man who makes money by other men's labour shall be compelled to give his workmen such a share of his profits as will enable them and their wives and children to live in decency and comfort, instead of rich men being allowed to grow richer and wantoner every day, while their poor slaves go, often, with naked backs and hungry bellies. Ah, maister," concluded the tinker in a tone where the heart was heard, "you know little about the real suffering there is in England; but I can tell you one thing, — and that is, that in the manufacturing places, where this pinch-gut system is most felt, thousands say they won't stand it much longer!"

The tinker ended this speech in a tone of voice so loud that Tim Swallow-whistle felt prompted to look round him for listeners. To his great chagrin, Prim the Puritan stood pricking his ears, but a few yards from Tim's door, with his back turned towards it, but evidently collecting every seditious syllable uttered by the travelling tinker. Tim placed his fore-finger significantly to his lips; and the tinker, marking the direction of Tim's eyes, took the hint, and immediately turned the conversation to the sub-

ject of the copper tea-kettle. The tailor's wife was called down-stairs; the kettle was produced; the bargain was readily struck; and the tinker proceeded, out of doors, with his vocation. Tim Swallow-whistle, meanwhile, being left to uninterrupted reflection, turned over and over again, in his mind, the weighty thoughts which had been started by the traveller. Tim could not easily quell the indignation against money-making oppression which the tinker's tale had raised within him; and the plain man's plain reasoning, respecting the rights of the labouring poor, appeared to him uncontradictable; yet all his sympathies for the distressed yielded, at length, to the strength of his common sense, and the consciousness that, care as much as he might, he could not alter the state of the oppressed: —

"The world is *as it is*," said Tim to himself, mustering up as much wisdom as he was master of; "it has not been right this many a long year, if all that our forefathers said can be true: and, what's worse, one doesn't see much chance of its being speedily set to rights. But what's the use of grumbling at it, day after day? that would only whitter the flesh off one's poor bones. No, no; what the man says is true enough, no doubt," concluded the soliloquising Swallow-whistle; "but I will not make myself uneasy about what I can't mend: at least I won't any further than I can help. Let the world wag! I'll try to make myself as easy as I can in it, with all its

awkwardness. Every dog has his day, — and perhaps mine will come yet."

This was no elevated moral channel in which Tim's thoughts were running when the tinker re-entered; but it was one which had served to drain Tim's heart from the troublous inundation of discontent, amid the toils and difficulties of his whole mature life. Tim invited the tinker to take another pipe, and entered on the old subject in a way that showed his mind was made up.

"Well, my good friend," he began, "I have been thinking about what has fallen to your lot to see; and I must take the liberty to tell you, that although I cannot help feeling grieved for the distress of others, yet I very much doubt the wisdom of a man dwelling on these thoughts of sorrow till he feels a disposition to be discontented with every thing around him."

"So do I, maister," chimed in the tinker, interrupting Tim,—"so do I: but when one sees and hears of things that one knows to be wrong, one can hardly prevent one's sen, you know, from turning 'em over in one's mind, and trying to think how they could be righted. I'm not a man given to low spirits, mysen, maister; I contrive to keep my heart up, and go on; though I don't think the world's quite right, for all that."

"I'm glad to hear what you said just now," continued Tim: "I assure you I've some little rough

usage to bear; but I always find cheerfulness, and a disposition to make the best o'things, by far the wisest way of living."

"So do I, maister," again burst in the tinker, very much to the annoyance of the tailor, who wanted to come to the end of his "say," without interruption — "so do I; only, you know there's no harm in talking about these things, now and then. And, besides, maister, you know, the world never will be any better, if we all shut our eyes, and say we see no wrong in it."

"Right, very right," replied Tim, a little bit put out of the path he had intended to take, but still resolved to make direct for his point, if he could; "I don't deny that: but how long will it be before the world is bettered, even if we keep our eyes open, and tell aloud of all the wrong we know in it? You and I are not the first who have discovered the world to be wrong, depend on't. Tinkers and tailors," continued Tim, smiling as he proceeded, "have been found in many countries, as far as my little book-larning informs me, who have imagined they could repair the rents in the world; but, in too many cases, these fellows were the very greatest practisers upon the helplessness of their weaker brethren. As for the few who have been in earnest, they have usually been silenced, in one way or other, by those whose interest it was to keep up the wrong in the world. That the world never will be better," con-

cluded Tim, "I will not undertake to say; but the day, I fear, is so far distant, my good friend, that you and I will neither of us be likely to live to see it. Don't take it amiss; but I can't help thinking so."

The tinker was ready with an answer; but two customers of Tim's here came in, and the travelling tinker, thinking that it would be both ill-mannered and wearisome to the tailor for him to stay, and attempt to renew the conversation, wished Tim "Good day," and prepared to set out again on his journey. Tim extended his hand, and returned the tinker's friendly gripe in a way that told the traveller his few strong hints would be thought of on another day.

With all Tim Swallow-whistle's shrewdness, he was perfectly free from craft. The thoughts created in his mind by this conversation with the travelling tinker naturally found their way, now and then, into his exchanges of opinion with his customers. Prim the Puritan was not slow in learning this: in fact, his evil nature had plotted Tim's destruction from the moment that he overheard the conversation between Tim and the tinker. Spies were sent to draw the tailor out; and, eventually, poor Tim was set down in the day-book of every influential man in Horncastle as a "dangerous and seditious fellow." From that day, poor Tim Swallow-whistle's business began to decline. The trial was a bitter one to Tim; for his aged grandmother sank to the grave, behold-

ing the clouds of adversity gather around her grandchild's dwelling; but, in the serenity of death, steadfastly directed her weeping descendant to trust in uprightness, and it would be his comfort. Then his mother sickened and died,—yielding, after a hard struggle, to the Last Enemy, but expiring with an exultant smile, after assuring her child that her own greatest consolation was that she had been dutiful to her mother, and she was confident he would yet see bright days as the reward of his spotless filial piety.

In vain Tim asked for parochial relief in the hour of his sore straitness, when his wife's health failed with the labour of waiting upon her sick relatives, and when Tim's earnings dwindled to a starving pittance by reason of his being compelled to wait upon those around him that could not help themselves. Prim held the purse-strings of the parish tight. Tim fasted often when his neighbours fed, and fed well: but he never despaired. "Every dog has his day," he still thought, but refrained from saying much, and still battled with thoughts that would have unmanned him.

Tim was repeating to himself his old adage one afternoon, about six months after his mother's death, when the clergyman of the parish entered his cottage, and, to Tim's indescribable surprise, desired Tim to take the measure of him for a new suit! Now the fact was, that the clergyman was, necessarily, more than once in Tim's dwelling during the successive

illnesses of his grandmother and mother; and, although prejudiced against the tailor, from the reports circulated to his detriment, yet he was too sensible a man not to use his opportunities of scrutinising Tim's real character, and too much a gentleman, in the best sense of the word, to permit a poor but worthy man to suffer if his own help could avail to relieve him. The clergyman saw that Tim wore his heart too much on the outside of his waistcoat to be a rogue; and the clergyman determined to help Tim by his patronage and his "good word."

The prejudices against Tim, however, were not dispelled all at once, though many began to look upon him with new eyes when they heard that the town-parson had actually given him orders for a new suit. The climax of the poor tailor's sorrows was now, however, gone by; and the future was preparing for him its triumphs and joys. One event gave him some trouble; but what kind of trouble? Ah! it was of that kind which is most truly troublous to a heart which has struggled to train itself into correctness. The termination of Prim's two years of overseership arrived, and the parish vestry would not pass his accounts, having discovered him to be guilty of an immense embezzlement! Tim had real trouble with his own heart throughout the whole of the day on which he first learnt this fact. Exultation over his old enemy was

the feeling that strove to be uppermost; but Tim virtuously kept it down.

Succeeding years displayed a striking contrast in the lives of Tim Swallow-whistle and Prim the Puritan. The houses which the cheating overseer had recently bought with the fruits of his fraud were sold to raise law-expenses; even his aunt's freehold went to the hammer for the same purpose: and Prim only escaped a prison by some technical flaw in the wording of the proceedings taken out against him. He was ruined, however, and became comparatively a beggar, while his character sank for life. Tim's honesty and industry, on the other hand, raised him daily in the estimation of his neighbours. Competence, amounting, at length, well-nigh to wealth, beamed upon him, and, ere his grey hairs went down to the grave, he lived to leave a crown-piece, often, at the door of the ragged and wretched man who was once his envious persecutor and the oppressive overseer. — Tim Swallow-whistle preserved, even to his dying day, that nobility of heart which forbade him to triumph over a fallen enemy; but he would often repeat, half mechanically, to himself, when passing from the poverty-stricken door of Prim the Puritan, "*Every dog has his day.*"

DAVY LIDGITT, THE CARRIER;

OR,

THE MAN WHO BROUGHT HIS NINEPENCE TO NOUGHT.

LOUTH, sixty years ago, as now, was the handsomest as well as the largest town in the north of Lincolnshire, though you would not then have seen in it, as you may now, if you go that way, a dashing mail-coach, with a dashing red-coated and gold-laced guard, dash off and dash in daily to and from Rasen, and Gainsborough, and Sheffield. "Long" Ludforth, too — (they spell it "Ludford" on the maps; but, doubtless, they who live there know better the name of the place than your mere map-makers!) — Long Ludforth, too, was nearly as deserving of its name, then, as now. And, in default of all other means of conveyance for goods and passengers, Davy Lidgitt, the carrier, traversed the ten miles of distance between the village and market-town "every Wednesday and Saturday — twice a week, regular," as the inscription read on the front of his neat tilted cart; for your new-fangled way of sticking the car-

rier's name on one side of his vehicle had not then been invented by the tax-making gentry at head-quarters.

Davy Lidgitt was excelled in diligence and punctuality by never a carrier, even in those diligent and punctual times, and gained the universal respect of his employers, and, what was of more solid value, a neat little independence, to boot, as the reward of his life of industry and uprightness. Davy, — it should be "Old Davy;" for that was the name by which he was known for the greater part of his public life, — Old Davy would have felt himself to be a happy man could he have regarded young Davy, his son, as one who was likely to tread, morally as well as physically, in his steps. But Old Davy Lidgitt, like all other mortals, lacked the single ingredient in his cup which could give it the power of making his bliss complete on this side the grave.

Not that young Davy was idle, or profligate, or devoid of wit, according to some people's acceptation of the term. In fact, the majority of the plain villagers of Long Ludforth agreed that, "if aught, young Davy Lidgitt had ower much wit for one of his calling." And, for activity, few could match young Davy. From a mere child he aspired to wield his father's long whip, and at ten years old could manage the brown mare and the black horse that composed the carrier's team as well as Old Davy himself could manage them. Moreover, he was always to be

found about the cart or the stable, at the market-town, when the goods were delivered, and could never be tempted to spend either his time, health, or money at the ale-tap. Up to the age of five-and-twenty, — when Old Davy, at sixty, fully retired to enjoy the brief remnant of life in the snug but small cottage he had purchased, — young Davy had not failed to accompany his father as regularly as Wednesday and Saturday returned in each week to Louth and back, attending so rigidly and cleverly to every item of parcel and package, letter and message, that the villagers would one and all declare "young Davy Lidgitt had a head like an almanack!"

"Why, what in the world, then, could it be," you will ask, "that caused old Davy to look upon a lad, with his son's commendations, in the light of disparagement?" If the truth must be told, we must begin at the beginning. Young Davy showed sundry symptoms of a disposition that his father did not like, even when a child: he would hook the gears one day in one mode and another day in another, often to the provocation of some such harsh exclamation on the part of the senior Lidgitt, as — "'Od rabbet thee! thou'st been at thy kickshaw tricks again, with the old mare's belly-band: she'll be kicking thy busy brains out some of these days!" And many a kick, to say troth, young Davy received for these "kickshaw" tricks: but he persevered, with the belief that the way of harnessing a cart-horse might be improved.

Yet his father could never discern that either in this or any other of his displays of genius, such as clipping or tying the manes of the horses in whimsical forms, or hanging their collars, and halters, and so forth, in "apple-pie order," as the old man called it, in the home stable — I say, old Davy could never arrive at the conclusion that young Davy, in any of these intended "improvements" ever effected a real one.

"But, Lord love thee, Davy!" Betty Lidgitt would usually say, when her spouse had been relating his boy's latest whim, in her ears, at supper-time, — "Lord love thee, Davy, he's only a child; and thou knaws childer will be childer: one can't set old heads upo' young shouthers: he'll give over with his meagrims when he grows older: thou wants patientness, Davy, — patientness! Thou knaws I tell'd thee so, before we were married!"

These pleasant motherly excuses for the lad quieted the father for some years; but, one day, when the young "Reformer" had proceeded so far as to take away the horse-shoe from the door-jamb, — that mystic surety of good luck to the cottage by the opinions of every inhabitant of Long Ludforth, and which the parson had never said was wrong, — old Davy could forbear no longer to put into execution a resolve that had been for some months forming in his mind.

"Betty! I'll take him to Wise Tom, and have his planet ruled!" said he, "for I feel sartain and sewer

some'at isn't right about the lad: he's the very devil for mischief! Lord ha' marcy on us, if the young varment hasn't tucken the horse-shoe away now! some'at will be happening us I'm sewer!"

And, on the following Monday morning, when his team had rested a day after their usual Saturday's travel, old Davy Lidgitt arose betimes, and, calling up his son, set forth with him on the way to Welton, to visit the astrologer.

It will be long before the memory of old Tom Cussitt, "the wise man of Welton," will be forgot in Lindsey. "Cusworth" was his proper name, but old Lindsey folk made it a rule to shorten folks' names when they had to use them often, and there were few names more frequently in a peasant's mouth, at that time of the day, for twenty miles round Louth, than that of "Tom Cussitt." Good Lord! if one were to tell all the stories one has heard of his discoveries of stolen goods by the stars; of the marks he was wont to put on the thieves, that the owners of the goods might know the rogues when they saw 'em; of the wondrous way in which he could show a love-sick maiden her future husband in the old-fashioned witch-looking mirror that hung in his darkened room; and of the strange facts he foretold to some people, when he "cast their nativities," — that mystic process in which he never erred a hair's breadth, — why, it would take a twelvemonth to go through the labour! But, to attend to old and young Davy. It was but

half-a-dozen miles from Long Ludforth to Welton, and so they and their little team were soon there.

Young Davy, it may be guessed, gazed hard at the "Wise Man," and thought him an awful-looking personage, though Tom Cussitt was, at that time of day, a somewhat handsome-looking man. His fine clear blue eye was not, as yet, overhung with those bushy, unsightly brows that marked him in old age; his fair, ruddy skin was not, as yet, disfigured and concealed by the filthy long gray beard he afterwards wore; nor had his fine manly height yet contracted a stoop. Old Davy had often seen Wise Tom before, having frequently conveyed customers to his cottage, and therefore he did not stare at him with wonder or surprise, like the lad. As for Tom, he, of course, stared at neither father nor son, being quite prepared, like Sidrophel, to say to every comer —

> "I did expect you here, and knew,
> Before you spake, your business, too."

Not that Tom Cussitt was one of your ordinary conjurers, — your mere schemers who take up the trade to scrape a shilling from the gulls among mankind. Many a rich man has gone from Tom's door without being able, although he proffered pounds to the star-gazer, to obtain one syllable from him in solution of the great problem of futurity which the rich man desired so much to know. Nor did Tom usually set about the process of solving a "horary

question," or "telling a fortune," with the imposing forms of books and almanacks. On some special occasions he would resort, like other clerks of the starry craft, to these learned appearances; but, more customarily, a single strong pithy remark, or two, delivered over his pipe, and in the course of a general conversation in which he engaged his visitors, comprised the gist of his prophecy respecting the future life of an inquirer, or of his direction for the recovery of stolen goods or chattels. Whatever might be the wise man's own confidence in the rules of prognostication by the stars, every shrewd observer noted that the prophet delivered his oracles rather by the gauge and admeasurement which his strong common sense enabled him to form of human character, and the accuracy by which it enabled him to judge of circumstances, than by any exercise of mathematical or other description of learned skill.

Old Davy was too full with the budget of young Davy's vagaries to need much craft on the part of one who wished to draw him out. The Wise Man quickly kenned what kind of stuff the young chap was made of, and did not feel that it required any great exercise of his wisdom to ken it, either. Old Davy, however, with all his fears for the lad's capricious inclinations, and their probable consequences when he himself might be lain in the grave, was scarcely prepared for the stunning severity of the single definitive sentence

wherewith Wise Tom summed up his prophecy of young Davy's "fortune."

"Well, then, Maister Cussitt," said Davy the elder, taking his pipe from his mouth, after the lapse of an hour's chat, "and so what do you think of him? I've tell'd you the day, I'm sewer, quite exact; and I've told you the hour at which Betty brought him into the world, as near as I can remember."

"Reach us a spell, my lad!" said Cussitt to the younger Davy, and pointed to a neat wire case that hung against the wall, and contained long strips of paper wrapped up for pipe-lighters.

"You'll want two," said the very sharp lad, "for my fayther's pipe's out, an' all!"

"Is it, lad?" said old Davy, looking eagerly into the head of his pipe. "Lord! what eyes thou hast! there's nothing can 'scape thee, I declare!" And he chuckled with pleasure at his boy's acuteness.

"And so what think you, then," he asked again— "what think you, Maister Cussitt, will be our Davy's luck?"

Young Davy had just lighted the two spells, had held them to the pipes, severally, and had thrown the papers, neither of them half consumed, upon the fire.

"Think!" exclaimed the wise man, eyeing the youngster fiercely, and glancing at the father with a look that seemed to ask if there was now any need to tell what he thought — "think!" said he; "why,

that he'll bring his ninepence to nought!" And he thrust his middle finger into the pipe-head to put out the fire in the tobacco, and placed the pipe, sternly, on the mantle-piece.

Old Davy's face fell; and he also laid down his pipe. Tom Cussitt took his large-skirted hat from the peg, called to his maid for the milking-kit, and prepared, according to his wont, to go forth and milk his cows; for he followed husbandry in humble and industrious style during the greater part of his life, notwithstanding his astrological profession. "Good morning, Davy Lidgitt!" he said; and left father and son, alike wonder-stricken, by the fire-side.

There, however, they did not remain many minutes, but were on their way to Ludforth; and a melancholy way it seemed to old Davy. Betty Lidgitt felt as melancholy as her husband when he had related Tom Cussitt's laconic prophecy. Yet she strove to comfort her spouse with the encouraging remembrance, that "the Wise Man had not said much; and, for the little that he did say, why, belike, it was meant more for caution than aught worse." Old Davy was willing to think so, but could not succeed in persuading himself of it; and, indeed, young Davy showed "too much of the cloven foot," as his father somewhat sourly said, at times, "to lead a body to think that the imp of mischief would ever leave him;" so that, to his dying day, poor old Davy would, ever and anon, sigh over his

remembrance of Tom Cussitt's short but sorrowfully significant saying.

The story would become tiresome by going over the catalogue of a thousandth part of young Davy Lidgitt's doings in the "improving way," during the dozen years that intervened between the visit to the Wise man of Welton and old Davy's retirement from business as a carrier. Nor is it needful to chronicle similar deeds of the son that occurred from that period to the day of the father's death, — though some of these latter sorely harassed the old man's temper, — especially young Davy's purchase of coloured collars for the horses, and a fancy tilt, that cost thrice the price of the old one, and let in the rain! It was when old Davy was "safe under the sod," as the sexton said when he had finished the covering of his grave, and clapped it soundly with his spade in token of admiration for his own work,— it was then that young Davy began to let all the world in Long Ludforth see there was a man amongst them that possessed brains.

First, the "reformer" pulled down his father's low cottage, and engaged a swaggering builder to erect a tall four-storied house of brick, with a slated roof, on the same spot, taking in the little spot that had glowed so delightfully for many a year with roses, and pansies, and marigolds. True, the purse of two hundred spade-aces, left by his economical parent, did not suffice to finish the house in the style he had

devised; so he warned the bricklayer to stop at three stories, and to leave out some of the fantastic stone ornaments he had procured at Louth. He sold the ornaments and some of the other extra materials which had already been brought upon his premises; but he permitted a tradesman to take them on credit, and was never paid for them. Then, finding the house was likely to remain unroofed for lack of money, he was constrained to go a-borrowing; but the errand and the reception he met reminded him strongly of one of his old father's sayings, which he used to think very simple when the old man was alive, — "He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing!" — but young Davy did not think the proverb quite so simple, now. The farmers shook their heads at him, wherever he went, and said "No;" without a syllable of preface or addenda. And as for the monied men at Louth, they had all taken their gauge of young Davy Lidgitt, as well as the Wise Man of Welton; and the "man of improvements" could only borrow on a hard mortgage.

"And who are you to put into this new house when it is finished, *Mister* Lidgitt?" asked Grumley, the grocer, of Louth, very politely, one day, as he was riding past, and saw young Davy standing by to look at the builders.

Young Davy looked foolish at the question; for, having neither father nor mother, brother nor sister,

in the world, he could only answer that he had no one to put into it but himself.

The grocer earnestly begged his company to dinner, when he next came to Louth; and young Davy felt so much flattered by so unusual an invitation, that he instantly accepted it. And young Davy found Mr. Grumley very cordial, and Mrs. Grumley exceedingly kind, — but, above all, the *Misses* Grumley were the most interesting creatures he had ever seen! The eldest, especially, won his respect, — or, he did not exactly know what to call it, — for he had thought more about improvements in horses, and carts, and stables, and houses, than aught else, all his life. But the eldest Miss — *the* Miss Grumley, by emphasis of courtesy — talked so sensibly about the clever improvements that young Mr. Brown had made in his farm-house, at Raithby, now his father was dead; and how he had married Miss Green, the chandler's daughter, and had bought such a nice gig!

To tell the reader at once, what he plainly sees is about coming to pass, young *Mister* Davy Lidgitt married *Miss* Grumley; and he also bought a nice gig — but it was bought on credit!

Proceeding with his "reforms" and "improvements," Davy turned *daily* carrier from Long Ludforth to Louth, in a smart, light van, having disposed of his father's old cart. But now young Davy began *to think*, — not willingly, but perforce, — for bills

were pouring in upon him that he could not pay. But Mr. Grumley was ready to *join in a note*, since young Davy had already performed that kindness, more than once, for his father-in-law. Still young Davy was compelled to think; for, more than once, his grand *daily* trip in the new van to Louth did not afford freightage enough to cover the expense of the two toll-gates which "improvement" had set up between Long Ludforth and Louth market-place. So Davy fell off to "every other day" as a carrier. This was his first retrograde "reform," but, alas! it was not his last.

Expenses daily became heavier. Mrs. Lidgitt was gay when a grocer's daughter in a market town; but she felt it requisite and becoming to "take the lead" in dress, since her settlement in a village, where the affair, too, was so comparatively easy. And then, in the course of two years, two little Lidgitts were squalling about the house; and, in addition to one regular maid-servant, and an occasional help from a stable-boy, a nurse was introduced as a constant member of Davy's household establishment.

The visit of a lawyer, one day, put the family into a flutter. Davy was taken aside, and informed that Mr. So-and-so had resolved to call in his mortgage. Davy's heart sunk, until he thought he must have dropped; but how overjoyed he became when Lawyer Gripple so cheerfully offered himself as mortgagee to succeed his client Mr. So-and-so! Yet, when the

new mortgage-deed was completed, Davy found himself, somehow or other, a hundred pounds more in debt for his house than before!

Young Davy Lidgitt now began to *think* more deeply, and proposed some curtailments of weekly expenditure to his wife; but she wept so passionately at the mention of them, that Davy's heart smote him for his cruelty. Then he tried to resolve on lessening his own "appearances;" but pride gat the better of him, and he dashed along, till at the end of one more year, Lawyer Gripple suddenly "called in his money," and followed up the call ere Davy could answer it, or procure another friend, by taking possession of Davy's house, and telling him that thenceforth he ceased to be any thing but a tenant, and for that title must pay him — Lawyer Gripple — twenty pounds a-year.

Before Davy could recover his surprise at this rapacious deed, Mr. Grumley failed in very heavy responsibilities, with very small assets, and young Davy was sent to prison for the debts to which he had pledged himself on account of his father-in-law.

To end a sorrowful story as speedily as possible, it remains but to say, that when poor Davy got out of gaol he found his wife and her children nearly starving and in rags, and living in a scanty, down-coming cottage, not half the size of that wherein his father and mother had lived so many years in contentment and prosperity — his house was not only entirely gone, but his van and horses were sold, and his business had

passed, months before, into the hands of an industrious stranger.

Penniless, sick, and wretched, poor Davy Lidgitt was compelled to apply to the parish for bread, and he had no alternative but to obey their direction, and break stones on the road!

He was beheld in that employ for many years after — a fallen, broken-spirited man; — and often would the aged women observe to each other, — as they passed him by to work in the fields, and remembered Tom Cussitt's prophecy, to which Davy's father would so often recur in his neighbours' hearing, — "So much for the man who hath brought his ninepence to nought!"

THE FISHERMAN AND THE FIDDLER;

OR,

"DON'T SAY SO TILL YOU ARE SURE."

It is a long day since Zed Marrowby and Phil Garrett passed quietly away from this wilderness of confusion and wrong, and their names are well-nigh forgotten. But they were, each of them, so unlike other folk in their way of life, and in their old-fashioned habits of thinking and talking, that there is no wonder they have slipped out of the world's memory as well as out of the world itself. Two odd old fellows they were deemed for many a year, albeit there are few happier old fellows, upon the whole, than they were. And who were they?

Zed was an humble fishermen on the Trent, and never knew what it was to be possessed, at once, of twenty shillings in his life. His father was called Zedekiah, but the son never reached that long-name dignity. Zed was taught the art and mystery of fishing with an angle, fishing with set lines and hooks, fishing with nets — in brief, all kinds of fresh-water

fishing, when a boy, by his father, — whose father and grandfather before him were each and all fishermen. Zed was a bachelor all his life long, and that means fourscore and five; and Zed never had but one bosom-friend, and that was blind Phil Garrett the fiddler.

Phil could not trace his ancestry in an uninterrupted line for several generations like his friend Zed. In fact, it may seem strange to a world so wise as the world is nowadays, but Phil Garrett never knew who was his own father! His earliest recollections were of hard usage by all around him save his mother, who herself died of hard usage, and left him to the ruthless world, a blind orphan at a tender age. There was as great doubt about Phil's true Christian name as there was about his parentage: some said it was Philip, and others said it ought to be Philander; here and there one contended it must be Philibert, while his god-mother, Abigail, inclined to believe it was Philemon, but even she could not justly remember — for, as she used to say, "the parson quite took away her recollection of it, by hemming and hawing, and being so long about the trifling matter of sprinking the child — and all the while she was pretty sartain the christening-cake would be burnt under the wood-ashes, for she made it herself, and placed it under the dish at the last moment, in order that it might not be spoilt while they were at church." However, Phil contrived to teach himself to play on the fiddle when a boy, and thereby managed to win

his own living, without ever seeing the sun, or knowing exactly, either his own name, or the name of his father.

Zed and Phil were nearly of an age, and became attached to each other when they were in their teens: indeed, from that period of life they were inseparable, except on special occasions. It was a singular companionship, was that of Zed Marrowby, the fisherman, and blind Phil Garrett, the fiddler. As soon as day broke, through spring, summer, and autumn, Zed might be seen wending his way among the osiers, on the banks of old Trent, towards his small narrow boat; and blind Phil, with his fiddle-case under his arm, might be seen leaning on Zed's left shoulder, and hurrying along with him. No matter how heavily it rained, or strongly it blew, the two happy old fellows were as constant in their time of rising, and of their embarkation, as the sun was in mounting above the east, unless Phil happened to be engaged for a wedding or a wake, for the blind fiddler was in high request for all the rustic rejoicings around Torksey, where the singular companions lived — I mean, at Marton, and Sturton, and Fenton, and Newton, on the Lincolnshire side of the Trent; and not less at Laneham, and Dunham, and Drayton, and Rampton, and Leverton, on the side of merry Nottinghamshire.

Winter, you would say, would be but a dreary season for the two old cronies, since it would put a stop to their voyaging, and, by confining them within

doors, would make them mopish and melancholy. But you are wrong, if you say so. There were nets and lines to make and to mend, and the past to recount, and the future to reckon upon; and Phil would play on his fiddle while Zed would sing, and when Phil's arm was weary with scraping, and Zed's throat was sore with piping, Zed would listen till he fell asleep with Phil telling ghost-stories and fairy-tales, and love-ditties and robber-ventures, — all of which he had learned from his god-mother, old Abigail Cull-simple, at once the most famous herbwoman, midwife, and tale-teller, in her own day and generation, for threescore miles round about ancient Torksey on the Trent, — nay, it were perilous to assert that she ever had an equal, in these three combined qualifications, throughout the whole region of Lindsey.

It would take some thousands of pages to narrate half the adventures in rain and fair weather, of the fisherman and fiddler, during their threescore years of friendship. Let it suffice to take up their life-story for some two or three days of the last summer they spent together in this world, commencing with a fine morning in which they unmoored their little boat somewhat earlier than usual, in order to reach Littleborough for a wedding, before the turn of the tide. The morning was such a delicious one, that, old as they were, the two old voyagers could not restrain their feeling of pleasure at the balmy and refreshing effect it had upon their weather-beaten frames; and, blind

as poor Phil was, you could not have failed, had you seen his expressive face when under very pleasurable emotion, to discern that it scarcely needs the language of eyes to demonstrate the heart's happiness. Their little skiff darted like a fowl along the stream, so finely did opening nature seem to nerve the old men's arms, and puff their little sail; the very fishes seemed scarcely to have time to take alarm while the oars plashed amid the liquid silver, but darted and gambolled after each other, — the rapid dace and the delicate bleak, and the golden-finned perch, — every moment to the surface of the stream, exulting, as it seemed, in the solar glory. It was a morning to fill with music every human soul that has any music in itself. The sweet matin lute of the lark thrilled through the heavens, and the still sweeter voice of the blythe milkmaid, as she tripped it, fresh and rosy, over the lea, was heard waking the echoes with her plaintive love-melody. Zed and Phil were too true children of Nature to disobey her influences, and thus chanted their hearts' sedate joy, as they bent at the oar: —

" Merrily we go, my man —
Merrily with the tide!
Catch the breezes while you can —
Here we'll not abide!

Storm and calm will soon be o'er —
Spread the flowing sail!
Lift thy heart with sorrow sore —
Catch the fav'ring gale!

Wouldst thou weep till set of sun —
From the break of day?
This life's stream will soon be run —
Laugh, then, while you may!

Mariners in life's frail boat —
Sighs and tears are vain!
Cheerily let's onward float —
Soon the port we'll gain!

Merrily we go, my man —
Merrily with the tide!
Catch the breezes while you can —
Merrily onward glide!"

Again and again they doubled the last verse, those brave old voyagers! until many a milk-maid came up the banks of Trent, leaving her cows on the lea, to listen more nearly to the merry song they had so often heard before from the two quaint companions of the fishing-boat.

The little ferry of Littleborough was at length gained, and Zed leaped as gaily on shore as if he were yet in his youth, and then handed Phil out, with his fiddle-case under his arm; and when the skiff was moored, away they hasted to the "Ferry Boat Inn," as the humble public-house was loftily termed, and where the intended wedding and merry-making was about to be held. After half-a-dozen hearty gripes of the hand, and as many congratulations on their good looks, the two old men were zealously pressed to "eat and drink, and not spare,"

by the bluff landlord. And, nothing loth, Zed and Phil sat down on the long-settle, and made free with a good hearty beef-steak pie, and a tankard of ale; and the landlord was ready to fill again ere the latter was fairly empty. "Don't ye be dainty about it, my hearties," said he, "for the youngsters will be down-stairs soon; they've been dressing this I don't know how long; and you'll ha' plenty to do, I warrant ye, when they happen to find that you're come: so do justice to your fare!"

And anon the bride that was to be was brought down-stairs by a crowd of laughing lasses, and, blushing like the May, was placed in a chair adorned with flowers; and soon the lads burst in with the bride-groom, all in best array of plush and velveteen; and when he stepped up to the chaired beauty for a morning's buss, the lads pulled him away and said "nay;" and then all clapped their hands with delight when they first saw Zed and Phil in the corner, and all shouted, as if they were mad, for a good thumping ditty that would put mettle in their heels. So Phil struck up first "Malbrook's gone to battle," and then "Gee-ho, Dobbin," and then "Grist the Miller," and then "She will and she won't," and then, "Nelly is gone to be married;" and each lad took his lass, and led up or followed the dance to the capers of Phil's bow, till "The parson's come!" resounded through the kitchen; and the marriage-procession was immediately formed, and the kitchen was de-

serted, for even Zed and Phil went off, the one to see, and the other to hear, lovely Polly of the Ferry-Boat Inn given away to sprightly and honest young farmer Brown that morning, at the neighbouring parish church of Sturton-le-Steeple.

The ceremony over, and the kitchen regained, feasting, fun, and frolic, were the order of the day. Phil's fiddle and Zed's throat were worked till the owners of them could scarcely work longer; and oh, the tales that Phil told, and the songs that Zed sung, in the course of that merry wedding-day! why, the like of 'em could not be said or sung by man or maid, wife or widow, within all Christendom!

Don't imagine, either, that the fun and frolic were partaken of merely by the younkers: let me tell you, that even the fat landlord himself, although verging on fourscore, caught so much of the spirit of the time, that he jumped up, all of a sudden, after watching the nodding head and smirking face of Dame Dinah Brown, the grandmother of the bridegroom, and discerning how she began to fidget, like himself, — I say he jumped up all of a sudden, and, seizing her hand, whirled her away, not in the least unwilling, to show the young lads and lasses that they had not forgotten a quick step, and all that, as old as they were. And, by Jingo! how all-alive did Phil look, while he screwed up his catgut for a new strain; and never was any thing seen in mortal man more wonderful than the ecstatic changes of his blind

face, while he struck up "Green leaves all grow sere!" as an accompaniment to the frisking feet of Dame Dinah and the fat old landlord. And then he changed the strain for one of rich merriment, while his sightless and strangely expressive countenance depicted every shade of wild and wilder glee, and vibrated throughout its whole surface with every thrill of the melody and gambol of the bow; insomuch that more than one youth forgot every thing around, and stood gazing at Phil's face, thinking they would never forget how it looked, if they lived even to be as old as Methusaleh.

On and on the aged dancers skipped, and "crossed" and "set," looking as gleeful as if they had never known what it was to be grave, until, streaming with sweat, and fairly wearied out with the mad employment they had been giving their heels, and to which they had been strangers for many a long year, they were constrained to sit down, avowing, meanwhile, that "they only wished they were young again, for then they would show the youngsters what a bit o' dancing was in their time!"

When the sun had set, Zed began to feel some degree of uneasiness to be gone. There was the Trent to voyage, for at least three miles, in order to reach their home at Torksey, and Zed knew the stream would be somewhat swollen, but much more he feared the state of his own upper story, since he had not been able to resist the pressing invitations

and challenges, first of one and then of another, and, consequently, his potations had been somewhat numerous. Having given Phil the hint, Phil began to complain of exhaustion as to his tale-budget, and of the power of his nerves to direct the bow; but it was long ere this would avail, and many a roaring ditty was launched forth from the thunder of Phil's catgut, amid the thundering heels of the country lads and lasses, before the two aged cronies could manage to obtain leave, once more, to launch their little boat, and strike off for home. The farewell chords were at last struck, the fiddle was boxed; and, accompanied to the water's edge by a merry company, Zed and Phil pushed off from shore amidst the hearty cheers of the merry-makers. Then, each taking his oar, as usual, away they went with the tide, that now swept up the river's course.

Much as they had sung that merry day, the two brave old fellows, nevertheless, trolled forth more than one ditty before they reached Torksey; and neither of them suffered any depression of spirits or strength as they prosecuted their homeward voyage. Zed Marrowby, especially — and, in good faith his alacrity must be fairly confessed to have owed its greater intensity to his most frequent potations—Zed, especially, sprung on shore with the nimbleness of a lad of twenty, as soon as they arrived in front of the ruins of old Torksey castle, which stands like a

blighted, and yet beautiful thing of the past, beside the very brink of the noble stream.

"As sure as a gun, Phil," cried the mellow old fellow, stamping with vehemence, as he was leading Phil under a propped fragment of the old fabric, "we'll not go to bed to-night till we've seen whether there be any gold in these vaults, as the story goes! I've heard you tell the tale about folks hiding their coin here, in the time of bloody Oliver, until my patience is worn out. I'm determined, Phil, to know whether any money can be found here, or not!"

"Why, zowks, Zed!" exclaimed Phil Garrett, "you're not so mad with that glass o' rum they gave you before you pushed off as to have taken it into your head to ——"

"Don't bother me, Phil!" said the fisherman in a pet, "I'm determined to fish up the gold out of these old vaults before midnight, as late as it is, and that's the long and short on't!"

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" cried Phil, uttering an old saying that he was very fond of; "how will you dig up the gold, Zed? you have never a shovel nor a pick-axe, you know."

"Then I'll soon have both," replied Zed; "you sit down here on this stone, Phil, and I'll go and slive into the Talbot yard, and I'll warrant it I'll soon have a pick-axe and a shovel." And off Zed scampered as fast as his old heels, impelled by his heated head, could carry him.

"Bring the dark lanthorn with you!" cried Phil, shouting after him as loudly as he dared to shout; and then, sitting down on the grass in lieu of the hard stone, began to think of the oddness and suddenness of Zed's resolution. "What a fool Zed always becomes when he gets a drop of rum!" thought Phil to himself; "and, confound it! I feel queerish, somehow, myself. I wish I had not drunk that tipler o'rum. It was very foolish of me, for I always tell Zed to stick to good old Sir John Barleycorn, and then no great harm can come on it. But what's the use of grumbling and growling at one's self when it's done? I'll e'en make the best on't, since it is so." And Phil was about to troll forth another merry ditty, when he remembered that it was near midnight, that it must be thereabouts pitch dark, and that he was among the ruins of Torksey Castle, where, according to a queer skin-freezing story he was wont to tell himself, the lady without the head was often seen to walk at midnight! So Phil, too muddled to remember that he could not have seen the headless lady if she had appeared, held his peace, and thought it was better to keep quiet in such a queer place and at such a queer time of night.

Phil had not long to wait for the return of his eccentric companion. Zed soon was at Phil's side, and, grasping his hand, assured him they would soon be as rich as Jews with the buried gold.

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" again cried Phil;

but Zed took no notice of it, and upheaving the pick-axe, without spending a moment in considering whereabouts he ought to begin, struck at the ground with all his might, assisted, not a little, at the first, by his invisible but potent friend, Dr. Alcohol.

"Have you begun so soon, Zed?" asked Phil.

"Ay, to be sure," replied Zed, "I'm in earnest, man, and mean to have this gold, depend on't."

"I'faith, it seems as though you did," returned Phil, feeling disposed to roast his old friend, as they say; "do you find aught yet?"

"Pooh!" answered Zed, "let me get another foot or so deeper, and then ask me."

"Oh, I'm in no hurry," said Phil; "only I thought I might as well be knowing. But are you tired so soon, Zed?"

"I'm only just resting a moment," replied Zed; but he was up, and was working away again with the pick-axe the next minute. Then he took the shovel and began to clear away the loose earth, so as to be able to see, by the light of the lanthorn, how deeply he had penetrated the ground.

"Do you see aught yet?" asked Phil with a slight titter which he suppressed as well as he could.

"Don't be in such a confounded hurry! I didn't think a bit o'gold would ha' made you so covetous to get at it!" answered Zed, throwing down the pick-axe, and pretending to be in a pet, though, in reality, it was the tremendous ache in his back that caused

him to throw down an instrument of labour to which his aged hands were quite unused.

"Nay, nay, I tell you, I'm in no hurry at all," again retorted Phil; "only, as I said before, I thought I might as well be knowing."

"All right, Phil!" cried Zed, in a twinkling of time, "here goes again!" and struck more savagely at the ground this time than ever; for, in spite of his affected coolness, the old fisherman began to feel very impatient. In the course of a very few minutes, however, Zed was again unable, from sheer weariness, to proceed, and, although he changed his implement again for the spade, yet his back ached too violently for him to go on with his gold-finding, so he sat down once more to rest, and wiped the streaming perspiration from his aged face with a hand that trembled, as indeed he trembled all over, like an aspen leaf.

"Mercy on us!" cried Phil, "how you puff and blow, Zed! Do you begin to feel ill with your hard work?"

"Pshaw! how old-womanish you talk!" retorted the fisherman, and started up again, like a young blood of four-and-twenty. But, somehow or other, Zed found it quite impossible to get on, the ache in his old back was so violent.

"I say, Phil," he said, pausing suddenly, and looking very cunning at the fiddler, — though the fiddler could not see either the sly wink of his eye or any

other of the signs by which the old fisherman intended it to be understood that a very shrewd thought had struck him, — "I say, Phil, what d'ye suppose I'm just now thinking about?"

"Can't tell exactly," replied Phil, though he had a somewhat knowing idea of what was coming, for all that.

"Why, I was thinking —— Oh!" said the poor old fisherman, feeling a twinge in his back so dreadfully excruciating that it forced him to cry out before he was aware —

"What! have you found the gold?" asked Phil, bursting into a titter; "have you found it, Zed?"

"Found the devil!" exclaimed Zed, growing really ill-tempered at being thus coolly roasted by his old companion.

"For Heaven's sake, take care, Zed; or we *may* find him, with a witness, in this queer place, and at this queer time o'night!" rejoined the fiddler; "but what may you be thinking about, after all, Zed?"

"Why, I was thinking we might cover up this hole, so that no notice would be taken of it, and then come and finish the job another time," replied Zed, who felt so much ashamed of what pain compelled him to say, that he could with difficulty get through his speech.

"Come, now, sit you down a bit, Zed," said Phil, in a tone of hearty kindness, that always came over Zed's more boisterous nature with the power of a

sweet lull after a squall, — "sit you down a bit, and let's have a bit o'talk, while you rest yourself, for I'm sure your old bones must ache with pain and weariness. Now, I say, Zed, just tell me, will you, what would you do with this gold if you found it?"

"Do with it!" exclaimed Zed, staring at the fiddler, though the fiddler could not stare at him; "what would I do with it, Phil?"

"Ay, what would you do with it? Are you tired of the old boat, after we've cruised in her so many long years?"

"Tired of her! God forbid!" answered Zed, with warmth rendered ludicrous by his insobriety; "no, Phil! you and I will never forsake the old boat until our own poor old timbers fall fairly in pieces!"

"I thought you could not be thinking about that," said Phil; "but what, then, I say, Zed, — what could you contrive to do with this gold, if you found it?"

"We could comfort the hearts of poor Dick Toller's motherless and fatherless children, and poor Bob Wilson's and Joe Martin's widows with it, you know, Phil," answered the old fisherman.

"God bless your old heart, Zed!" cried Phil, grasping his old comrade's hand, while his voice faltered with deep emotion, "that's spoken just like you! But I tell you, Zed, it is but a wild scheme to be killing yourself with trying to find this gold."

"To speak truth," said Zed, interrupting the other,

"I begin to think so, too: only, you see, Phil, this old head o'mine always turns so wild when I happen to be such a fool as to take rum when they offer it me. As you always say, Phil, if one could but have the resolution to stick to Sir John Barleycorn instead of ——"

"Well, well, Zed, say no more about it," said Phil, remembering that the transgression was not entirely confined to his friend; "shovel in the moulds as soon as you can, and let us be making our way home, for yon's twelve by the church clock, and we mustn't be after sunrise, you know, to-morrow; 'twill be bad luck if we be, depend on't."

So Zed shovelled in the earth as fast as his aches and pains would permit him; and at length Phil threw the pick-axe over his shoulder, and Zed bearing the fiddle-box, and shovel, and lanthorn, without spending more time in talking, they hied them home as nimbly as they could, dropping the pick-axe and shovel over the Talbot yard wall as they went by, and speedily throwing themselves on their joint bed, when they had reached it, fell asleep almost in a moment.

Before the sun arose, however, they were up and in the open air; but Zed groaned heavily, more than once, as they went along towards the Trent bank, for his aged bones were very stiff at the joints, as he said, and he often called himself a fool, inwardly, as he thought of his wild, money-digging freak of the

preceding night. His melancholy, however, was but transitory. The merry-hearted old men were soon on their favourite element; the sun began to throw its cheering beams once more upon the rippling waters; and, as the willows on the banks of the noble Trent waved in the gentle breeze, and the rich meadows on the border of the river sent forth their reviving fragrance, Zed lifted up his head, while his hand plied the oar, and in the fulness of a happy heart thus opened the conversation for the day: —

"Well, I wouldn't change places with the king on his throne, Phil; I don't believe there's a happier pair than you and I, Phil, in the wide world. And yet, now, as wild a scheme as that was of mine last night, I cannot help wishing, this morning, that we had some o' that gold at this moment. I could like to try my hand, Phil, as old and inexperienced as it is in such work, at making some part of the world happier."

"And so could I, Zed," said Phil; "and now don't you think that my godmother's grandfather's plan of dividing the land would be a good one, and tend to make the world happier, if it were carried into effect?"

"The deuce is in you, Phil, for always bringing up that plan of your godmother's grandfather!" said old Zed; "why, the plan may be good enough, Phil; but how can it be brought about?"

"How can you get the gold?" retorted Phil.

"Good!" said Zed, with a hearty laugh; "i'faith, Phil, one scheme is as likely to be brought about as the other: but, take hold of that end o' the net, Phil, for I see a famous pike or two, darting about; and, you know, we must try to get something to-day."

The net was thrown out, but failed; and, what was most unusual, the labour of Zed and Phil was continued for several hours without the capture even of a solitary eel. Phil often thought Zed threw out the net very wildly, and imagined the liquor he took at the wedding had not yet spent its effects on him; but the blind man could not be sure, for Zed seemed resolutely taciturn.

'Twas about ten in the forenoon that Phil felt the little boat was "brought up,"—he thought in an inlet, or small creek, on the Lindsey side of the Trent, after they had laboured with nets and lines ever since a little after sunrise, and all without a single instance of success. ——

"Phil, d'ye know why I've pulled in here this morning?" said Zed, as he was mooring the skiff.

"No, by'r leddy!" answered the old-fashioned fiddler, "I can't tell, for the life of me! but it seems to me that you've pulled in at Burton Folly, — have you not, Zed? and what's the meaning of it?"

"Look sharp, Phil!" said Zed, briskly helping Phil out of the boat, "we've had hard luck in the water this morning, but we'll try our luck on land

for once: we'll have one or two of 'Squire Hutton's pheasants before we leave the holt."

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" said Phil, for that was a common saying with him, as I hinted before; "I wish I could *look sharp*, as you bid me, Zed,— for I'll be hanged if you are not tearing my poor legs among the whins, like old pork, as the saying goes."

"The deuce I am!" exclaimed Zed, slackening his pace; "I wouldn't hurt you, for all the world, Phil: but you know it's worth while trying to catch a pheasant or two,— they're such fine game."

"I don't know, Zed," rejoined Phil, "whether it be worth while or not: we may get into a scrape by it, as old as we are, and——"

"Pshaw!" cried Zed, with an air of resolute contempt; "come along, Phil!—come along!"

"O come along, ay!" said Phil; "I shall go with you, if you go to the very devil!— but then I don't see what's the use of going there, yet,— as old 'Squire Pimpleface used to say, when he gave up playing cards at Saturday midnight, and refused, ever after to play on Sunday mornings——"

"Hush!" said Zed, stopping short,—"my eyes! why, that must be the gamekeeper! No, it isn't:— but we had better lie down, Phil."

"Down be it then!" said Phil, prostrating himself among the long grass, while the old fisherman followed his example.

"Now, tell me," continued the fiddler, in a whisper, as they lay along among the grass, and the fisherman was anxiously keeping the look-out, — "tell me how you intend to catch the pheasants, Zed: you know you've no gun; and you can't catch 'em with a net in open day, — besides you haven't brought the net out of the boat, have you?"

"Pooh!" replied Zed, "why, I've heard my father say that 'Squire Hutton's pheasants used to be as tame as bantam cocks, even in his time. We may catch 'em, bless your soul! ay, easily! And, if not, I'm sure I could hit one and knock it down with my hat."

The blind fiddler burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter on hearing this artless declaration from his ancient companion.

"Zowks, Zed!" he exclaimed at last, "thou hast got some wild maggots, for sure, into thy head this morning! prythee look out again, and see if the coast be clear; for the sooner we shove off in the boat again the better, I'm very sartain."

"Confound that fellow! he's coming this way," said Zed, in a voice of alarm. And, indeed, there now seemed to be cause for fear, seeing that a tall man, with a gun on his shoulder, was hastening down the hill, apparently in a direction towards the foolish hiding-place of the fiddler and the fisherman.

"What shall we do, Phil?" asked Zed, in the next breath.

"Cut and run!" cried Phil, and sprung up as nimbly as a hare when you stumble upon her seat.

"Come along, then!" said Zed; and, seizing his blind companion by the hand, away they galloped, as fast as their old limbs would wag down the declivity, to the boat.

Zed pushed Phil, head over heels, into the skiff, and, jumping in himself, scudded away out of the creek as fast as he could possibly "scull," or turn the oar, at the boat's stern, after the manner of a screw, in the water. The gamekeeper came up the water-side, and approached within a few yards of the boat, before the adventurers could make their way back into the broad Trent.

"You are two very old men," said he, lifting up his hand in a warning manner, "or I would certainly detain you, and have you indicted for trespass. Take care you are never found here again!"

Neither of the old men made a word of reply; and the gamekeeper walked away.

"Detained us! — would he?" said Zed, in a low, but contemptuous tone, as soon as they had gained the breadth of the river, and the gamekeeper was sufficiently out of hearing, — "how could he have done that, if he had tried, think you, Phil?"

"Never mind talking about that, Zed, — let us be content with having got out of a scrape," answered blind Phil: "but now tell me, Zed," he continued, putting an oar on one side of the boat, and taking his

share of labour with as easy naturalness as if he had possessed the most perfect eyesight, — "what it could be that put such a wild notion into your head as to lead you to think of catching a pheasant with your hand, or of knocking it down with your hat: — why didn't you take a bit o' salt to throw on its tail, Zed?" concluded the fiddler, and burst into another fit of helpless laughter.

"He — he — he!" said the fisherman, forcing a faint laugh, to conceal his shame and vexation; — "never mind, — never mind that, Phil!" he said, — "my old head gets weak, or I might ha' been sure it would be a fool's errand. Was not it a mighty piece of impudence in that thief of a gamekeeper, think you, to tell us he had a mind to indict us for 'trespass,' as the Jack-in-office called it? — what harm could we do, Phil, by just trampling among the grass for a few minutes?"

"Poor folks are not allowed to tread upon rich folks' land, you know, Zed, without their leave," said the fiddler.

"No; but isn't it hard that there should be such a law, Phil?" said the fisherman.

"Why, as for that, Zed," replied Phil, "my godmother's grandfather, — who, my godmother used to tell me, was a famous scholar in his day, — used to say that all the land belonged to every body, and that nobody ought ever to have called an acre his own, in particular. If that had been the case, you see, Zed,

the gamekeeper could not have threatened to indict you and me for trespass this morning."

"No more he could, Phil," rejoined Zed; "but, then, if the land belonged to every body, — in such a way that nobody could say an acre belonged to him, only, — why, how would the land be ploughed and the grain sown, — for you know the old saying, Phil, 'What's every body's business is nobody's business?'"

"My godmother's grandfather used to say that people ought to join in companies to do it," replied Phil: "it's a subject I am not master of to the extent he was, by all account; but I feel sure of one thing, Zed, — that the world could not have been much worse divided than it is at present, since the rich have so much land among them, and the poor have none."

"You are right there, Phil, beyond a grain o'doubt," rejoined Zed.

"And my godmother's grandfather used to say besides," continued the fiddler, "that God Almighty gave the world to every body, and that the rich had stolen the poor's share of the land — for God Almighty never left them destitute."

"Then, in that case, Phil," said the fisherman, "there is a share, each, belonging to you and to me: and then it seems doubly hard to be told, when your own share has been stolen from you, that you shall

be indicted for trespassing upon the land of one that has more than his share — doesn't it, Phil?"

"Right, Zed, right!" returned Phil; "I'm pleased to find you relish a bit of sensible talk, now and then; and can you deny, now, that that plan of my godmother's grandfather would be a real good one, and tend to make every body happy. Place all the folks in the world on a level, Zed, — and let every man take his fair share in ploughing and tilling, you know, Zed, — and then let every man share in cutting the corn, — and all would have a fair title to eat it. You must see this to be fair — quite fair, Zed?"

"Fair enough, no doubt," replied the fisherman; "but then, Phil, — as I always ask you, but you never answer me, — how can you contrive to bring all this about?"

"Nay, now, you don't argue fair!" answered Phil; and it was the only answer he had, like many more learned proposers of good theories.

"A plague on all such gibberish!" exclaimed Zed, "we shall want but a small share of any thing long, and if we don't get our fair six feet of land when we have done sailing, why, we can rest very well in Davy Jones's locker. Where's the use of bothering our old brains with such crabbed matters?"

"Ods bobs and bodikins!" replied Phil, "but I think you are about right, Zed: I must own it's only

a simple sort of a thing for you and I to be troubling our heads about great folks and their lands."

"I' faith, you talk sense, Phil!" said Zed; "confound the great folks! let 'em take their land! We've managed to push along through threescore summers and more, and we can manage to get through, I think, now. But, swape in, Phil! for we're just alongside Littleborough again, and I'm so hungry that I feel inclined to step on shore, and ask for a bite of the wedding-cake this morning: I'll warrant 'em they'll be keeping up the merriment yet."

"Promise me one thing, though, Zed," said Phil,—"that you'll take no more rum, if they offer it you, and that you won't stay longer than a couple of hours or so."

"Don't think I shall play the fool twice over!" retorted Zed; "I'll warrant it I'll come away as sober as a judge this time, and take no more fool's tricks into my head to-day."

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" observed Phil, in his usual sly way; but Zed did not answer, for they were now at shore, and the fisherman had leaped out, and was once more mooring the little boat.

It is hardly necessary to relate that Zed found it impossible to keep his hasty promise of a very short stay, seeing that the "Weddingers" were "keeping it up" in true old-fashioned style, and Phil's fiddle became, right soon, the very soul of their merriment. Phil, however, had made his mind up, and succeeded,

though with great effort, in getting his old companion once more fairly afloat and on the way home about an hour before sunset. Although Zed had, indeed, the virtue to refuse the parting cup of rum, when it was offered, yet his old noddle was far from being its own perfect master, by reason of his frequent revisitations of the ale-pottle; and the first mile on the water was all music of the most gleeful nature with the old voyagers. "Indeed," as Phil himself used to say, when talking about it, "we had each of us whetted our whistles till will-ye, nil-ye, we must pipe, and couldn't help it!" They were trolling forth, for the last time, their old burthen of

> "Says I to myself, says I,
> Though I can't laugh, I won't cry;
> Let 'em kill us that dare; they're all fools that care:
> We all shall live till we die!"

when the report of a gun, and the sudden flight of a drooping heron across the Trent, arrested their music.

"By Jingo! she's a dead bird, in three minutes!" exclaimed Zed; "mark how her right wing droops, Phil!"

"I wish I could mark it," said Phil; "but you always forget that my poor old eyes are blanks, when you've ——"

"There she goes, plop among the osiers!" cried Zed, in an ecstasy; "pull away to the larboard, Phil. I'll have her in a twink."

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" observed Phil, but pulled away like a dragon in the direction recommended by his companion, nevertheless.

Zed leaped out of the boat in a confounded hurry, when he thought it was near enough for him to gain the shore; but he leaped out too soon, for he fell flat on his face among the "warp," as the mud of the Trent is called in Lincolnshire, and floundered like a flat fish when it has been left by the water in a situation where it cannot get away.

"Holloa! what, in the name o' bad luck, are you about?" cried Phil, hearing poor Zed make a mighty scuffle among the mud.

Zed made no answer, but kept struggling on; for the fact was, that he was so eager to secure the bird, that he had succeeded in laying hold of one of its legs, and, keeping hold, prevented himself from rising. The heron and Zed made a desperate flapping and floundering, insomuch that Phil roared out, more than once,—

"What, in the name of heaven and earth, are you about, I say, Zed?"

"Keep the boat in shore," cried Zed, with his mouth half filled with mud; "I shall have her in another minute."

"'Don't say so till you're sure!'" retorted Phil again; and just then the sportsman who had shot the heron jumped out of his boat on a firmer part of the strand, and, running along the bank, arrived at

the spot where Zed was struggling with the bird. He struck off Zed's hold of the fowl with a slight blow from his fowling-piece, and bore away the bird in triumph. Zed slipped into the Trent, and went souse over head, but rose instantly, and clambered into the boat. He vented his disappointment and vexation against the sportsman in no very gentle terms, while the sportsman mocked him from the bank; and, when the captor of the heron stepped into his boat, Zed urged Phil to pull away, that they might capsize the fellow, and give him a ducking, as he said in his foolish haste. But Phil was always Zed's better angel, though he was but a blind old fiddler. "No, no, Zed," he cried, "you shall not go that way. Let us make for home, that you may get to the fire-side. I say you shall *not* go — and I mean it, too."

Nobody in the world could control Zed Marrowby but Phil Garret, when old Zed was in his fuddled freaks; and even Phil could not always succeed; but Zed's wet shirt helped to cool his choler in this instance.

"To old Nick with the fellow, and his heron-sue!" cried Zed, pulling in the same direction with Phil; "I'll e'en let him take his live lumber: what good will it do him?"

"Just as the fox said of the grapes, when he couldn't reach 'em — 'Hang 'em! they're as sour as crabs!'" rejoined Phil; "but that was what I said

to myself, when you were struggling so hard to get the useless fowl; and what good would it have done you, Zed?"

"Hang me, if I know, exactly!" replied Zed, looking foolish, and wishing himself in a corner.

"You wouldn't like to eat a heron-sue, for they're as rank as stinking fish, I've heard say," continued Phil; "and what else you would have done with it I'm quite at a loss to guess: but never mind, Zed, you've got a cooler, now, — and I think you won't be so hot again for some time to come."

"Well, well, it's all in our lifetime," said Zed, resolving to be cheerful; "only pull away, and let us get to our own fire-side, that I may dry my old skin, there's a jolly fellow!"

"So I will, Zed," replied Phil, and doubled the force of his strokes at the oar; "but I hope you'll promise me not to resume your gold-digging when we land under the old castle-walls."

"I will, I will, Phil, — and so don't banter me any more; I shall be a cooler man for some time to come, after this, depend on't," answered Zed, with his teeth chattering.

And Zed spoke as truly as ever a prophet spoke, and much more truly than many; for, although he got well warmed ere he went to bed, yet his participation of so much extra liquor at the wedding, his foolish freak at money-digging the preceding night, and his cold bath to conclude, operating together

upon his aged frame, produced rheumatic effects which never left him.

Zed Marrowby and Phil Garrett left their voyaging at the close of that summer. True, they made all fit and industrious preparation for the next spring; and Zed's heart was gleefully bent on resuming their old cruises on their beloved Trent, and in their beloved old boat; but Phil listened with a foreboding heart to the deep cough which shook Zed's old body through the winter, and often interrupted his fervid utterances of what pleasure he expected when summer should come again. And when Zed Marrowby would exclaim, "We shall have another merry summer's cruise yet, Phil!" Phil Garret would answer with more solemnity, much more, than was his wont to put on, "Don't say so till you're are sure. I think, Zed, we shall cruise no more in this world; and I hope our next port will be in a better land." Zed poohed and pshawed, for some time, at this "solemn way o' talking," as he called it; but at length he began to feel that Phil was right — he grew feebler as the spring drew nearer, and when it came, feeling the expectation to be vain of ever stepping again into the beloved old boat, he took Phil's advice — for he said he always thought it worth more than the parson's — and strove to fix his mind on reaching the happy port in the better land.

Zed Marrowby's end was calm and peaceful; and

so was that of Phil Garret, his faithful companion, who was also laid under the green sod in old Torksey churchyard within six months after. The memory of their names and lives is well-nigh lost in the rural locality where they lived; but there is not a saying more common in old Lincolnshire to this day than that quaint caution so often uttered by the blind fiddler to his less grave comrade, "Don't say so till you are sure!"

MASTER ZERUBBABEL,

THE ANTIQUARY;

AND

HOW HE FOUND OUT THE "NOOSE LARNING."

ANTIQUARIES are scarce now-a-days. Don't mistake me, reader; I know that there is an abundance of writers on things which are ancient — ay, and more, that certain pragmatical folk pretend now to know more exactly how every thing went on two thousand years ago, nay four thousand years ago, than was known a few generations since by the first scholars in Europe. But don't say I question the likelihood of people knowing more about the ancients the farther time removes us from them, — because that would be literary heresy, and would bring upon an unlucky wight the hot persecution of the orthodox. But — I repeat it — Antiquaries are scarce now-a-days. I mean, your real thorough-bred ones, if I may say so — the fine old fellows who forgot their breakfasts and dinners, walked out in their night-caps, went to bed in their inexpressibles, — in brief,

did all manner of queer absent things by reason that they were ever present, in mind, with the long bearded Druids, or the starched Romans, or the waggish Athenians, or the broth-supping Spartans, or some other of the peoples who have been dead and buried hundreds and hundreds of years ago. Talk of antiquaries!—where are your lean, skeleton, paragons of patience now, who can dwell seven years, with ecstasy, on the contemplation of a nail proven to have been attached to a horse-shoe of ten centuries old,—or who will write you, fasting, twenty folio sheets on the discovery of an urn of Roman coins, or the opening of a British tumulus? The race is now extinct: it has been driven out of existence by the newer and more civilised race of the gentlemen antiquaries,—just as the aborigines of New Holland and North America are following where the Peruvians have already gone, into the realm of nought, before the European grasp-alls.

One of the latest existing specimens of the genuine antiquary was to be found in the little county town of Oakham, in little Rutland, some seventy years bygone. Zerubbabel Dickinson was his name, and he was proud of it;—and many an unwilling and loitering urchin had he whipt through the nouns and verbs, and the "Propria quæ maribus," into the "As in præsenti," in his time, for he kept the best school in the town, during his best days;—and when his vigour declined, and his eyes and ears grew somewhat dim,

he still continued to exert his skill and intelligence in the induction of a more contracted number of pupils into the porches of classic learning. But then he no longer enjoyed the high gratification of being addressed in his full, imposing name, alike by peasant, tradesman, or gentleman: Zerubbabel sunk to "Hubby," as the fine old pedagogue's shoulders declined in their stately height, and his slower sense rendered it less certain that he heard distinctly every syllable which was uttered by his acquaintances. Yet there was no acidity of motive, no ill-naturedness, in the use of this familiar abbreviation, for Hubby Dickinson was as much beloved, if he were not quite so stiffly respected, as "Master Zerubbabel" had been. And that shows, almost beyond the necessity of telling, that the fine old antiquary had contracted no rust of the heart among the rusty coins he had turned over so oft and so ecstatically; but, rather, that his excellent nature had mellowed and become more loveable with age, though it had shrunk from its former somewhat pride-blown proportions.

Self-complacence Hubby Dickinson had felt, in his day,—and he must have been a philosopher, indeed, could he have utterly subdued such a feeling, — seeing that his learning was esteemed, by gentle and simple, a thing so ponderous and vast, that every body wondered how Master Zerubbabel's brain could hold it, or his shoulders bear the burthen of it. Certes, there was not even a clergyman in the neighbour-

hood, despite his Oxford or Cambridge matriculation, but what resorted to the humble abode of the great antiquarian schoolmaster for the interpretation of difficult Greek or Hebrew texts; not an ancient will or parchment ever puzzled a Rutland lawyer, but it was brought to Master Zerubbabel Dickinson to decipher it; and not a ploughboy or a hedger or ditcher found a rust-eaten coin, or an ancient key, or a mysterious-looking fragment of pottery beneath the earth's surface, but they would forthwith journey to the dwelling of the "high-larnt" Oakham schoolmaster to learn the meaning, or the use, or the value of their discovery. Coins the illustrious Zerubbabel possessed of all ages, and almost all countries — at least, so he believed, — and keys of the most ornate Saxon fashion; and spear-heads and arrow-heads of the most primitive Keltic rudeness; beaking-bills of the age of Alfred, and daggers of the reign of Canute; fragments of steel-shirts that had been worn in the Crusades; and hilts and crosses of swords which had done service in Cressy or Agincourt: and all these were so learnedly arranged, that their order, itself, proclaimed the antiquary's incomparable erudition; while the syllables he would utter in illustration of their uses, and ages, and owners, and concomitants innumerable, left you in a perfect whirl of wonder!

Now, of all these, the priceless contents of his precious museum, Zerubbabel had written folio upon folio; and still continued to write thereon, feeling

that it behoved him to say all that possibly could be said, on topics of such surpassing magnitude and importance, ere he ventured to give his lucubrations to the world. Nevertheless, these were minor labours, which, compared with one great and grand undertaking that occupied nine-tenths of every leisure hour of his more advanced life, were but as so many ant-hills to a pyramid.

Reader, hast thou ever seen the old castle of Oakham? If thou hast not, and opportunity will serve, prythee, go thither, and feast thy eyes with the wondrous array — not of breathing sculptures, or matchless pictures; not of antique folios or curiously carven cabinets; not of storied tapestries or blazing heraldries — but of horse-shoes: ay, horse-shoes of all sorts and sizes, that adorn the walls of that singular old Saxon hall, — supported by its "antique pillars massy proof," — and stretching its primitive roof overhead. A sight it is, pregnant with abundant reflection, that curious monument of feudalism; and many and marvellous are the stories they tell you about its origin: but, chiefly, they report that Ferrers — the Earl now, but simply, the *ferrier*, or farrier, to the victorious Norman — obtained, with this fief, authority to demand a horse-shoe of any knight, baron, or earl, who rode for the first time through his manor of Oakham. And many a veritable shoe taken from the foot of the steed of proud baron, or chivalrous knight, — his name obliterated by the rust

of ages, — you behold on those walls; but therewith now mingle the mock-shoes of the modern great: a semblance, merely, put up at a great price, in some instances, they say. Gigantic shapes, some of these modern things are: such are those bearing the inscriptions "H. R. H. the Prince Regent," and "H. R. H. the Duchess of Kent," which latter hath a more diminutive one beside it, inscribed "the Princess Victoria." Of the judges, who here hold the courts of assize, the modern monuments of this curious kind are the most numerous; and if you listen to a sly Oakhamer he will not fail to tell you how often that model of political consistency, of generosity, liberality, integrity, impartiality, gentleness, and all the enlightened virtues — the ever-to-be-commemorated Abinger — was *dunned* for his five pounds, and how often he contrived to slip, like an eel, through the fingers of those whose office or privilege it is to claim the shoe or the price of it, before he was finally caught. Yet *there is* the shoe of the stainless and exalted legal functionary on the wall, — so that he *was* caught at last!

Pardon, reader, this most unseemly wandering from the illustrious subject of our present biography, the erudite Zerubbabel Dickinson. Now it was in the contemplation of this unique monument of baronial greatness, — it was in the collection and collocation of manuscripts relative to the identity of the several shoes, — it was in the array of the pedi-

grees of those in whose names they were put up, — it was in brushing away the rust (not from the shoes, for the discerning Dickinson would have adjudged him a pagan, of a verity, and no Christian, who dared to disturb a grain of it!) — the rust of uncertainty that hung about the names and memories of those to whom the more ancient furniture of horses' feet belonged, — it was in this mine profound of all that was important, and noble, and useful, and great, and grand, about the countless catalogue of horse-shoes that were nailed to the walls of the great hall in the castle of Oakham, that the learned and laborious Zerubbabel dug and delved, — it was on these themes, I say (and I scarcely know how to express myself worthily on so magnitudinous a matter), that the indefatigable and magnanimous schoolmaster-antiquary expended the choicest energies of his untiring intellect.

This, courteous reader, was the prime labour — the *opus majus* of Master Zerubbabel Dickinson. The work was to have been entituled "*Tallagium illustrissimum; seu Catalogus solearum ferrearum*" — with I know not how many more *ums* and *arums*, besides. *Was* to have been? Yes; for let it not be supposed that so stupendous a work was ever finished. It was the opinion of the laborious Zerubbabel himself that it never could be finished, so transcendent was the *beau-idéal* of such a work that he had conceived.

But enough of a subject which, in this degenerate age, will never be placed at its right value. This slender fragment of a biographic memorial was not commenced so much with the view of showing how truly great a man was the erudite Master Zerubbabel, — since we would despair as deeply of doing justice to so immense a subject as Zerubbabel himself despaired of completing the leviathan folios of the mighty "Tallagium illustrissimum:" we have a more philosophic purpose in view—namely, the proof, by history, of the striking moral truism, that the greatest men are very little men when you take them out of their accustomed sphere: in other words, that the wisest men are fools when you talk to them about things with which, in spite of their wisdom, they are not conversant. But why prove a truism? Ah, my friend, these same truisms, as the world calls them, for the greater part, are just the very things that want proving ——.

"Master Hubby," said a jolly fat farmer who called, with his fat wife and her egg-basket, at the schoolmaster's door, towards five of the clock on a market afternoon, "we've browt ye a queer, odd-fashionedish sort on a thing, here, that we f'un i'th' home clooas tuther day; can ye tell us what it is?" and the farmer produced an ancient fragment of iron-work of a crooked form, but so unlike any modern utensil of any kind, that any one but an antiquary might well be puzzled with it. Nay, the profoundly

erudite Zerubbabel himself was nonplused for the moment! He turned it over and over, and put on his spectacles, and then took them off again, and wiped them, and re-adjusted them to the most perfect distance for his natural optics—that is to say, he placed them as near to the very tip of his nose as they would remain without falling off,—but all his delays for consideration would not do: he was compelled to confess that he did not know what it was!

"Why dooant ye, indeed?" cried the farmer with a stare.

"The Lord ha' marcy on us! you dooant say so, Master Hubby, do ye?" echoed the farmer's wife, perfectly electrified with the thought that there was any thing ancient which Hubby did not understand; and she set down her basket of eggs, and drew out her spectacle-case, and put on her spectacles also, to gaze at Hubby in his.

And so there stood the odd trio at the learned schoolmaster's door: the man of ancient learning, barnacled to the nose-tip, and holding up the curious crooked rusty piece of iron with a gaze of indescribable eagerness; and the farmer with open mouth, and hands buried in the profound pockets of the plush waistcoat that enveloped the goodly rotundity of his person; and the farmer's wife, with the basket at her feet, her arms a-kimbo, and her eyes directed with intense earnestness through her spectacles on

the movements of the illustrious Zerubbabel's countenance.

There was a perfect silence of full three minutes, and still the trio gazed on.

"Where found ye it?" asked Hubby, at last, not knowing what other question to adventure.

"At Hambleton on th' hill," replied the farmer; "and what think ye to't then now, Master Hubby?" he asked again.

Zerubbabel shook his head, and there was again a profound and perfect silence.

"You know, Davy," said the farmer's wife, at length, "young Bob Rakeabout said he was somehow of a mind it was ——"

"Pooh, woman!" said the impatient farmer; "where's the use and sense of telling what such a rattle-scallion as he thinks?"

"Nay, but, Davy," reiterated the spouse, "it may be of use, for they say he's book-larnt."

"Book-larnt! ay, mally good faith, I think as much: and noose-larnt, too," replied the farmer; "and I wish, when his last noose is tied, he may be allowed benefit o' clargy!" and he burst into a loud laugh at his own wit.

"Well, howsomever," said the wife, "young Bob said he could swear it was a spur, and nowt else."

"*Calcar equitis Romani*, of a verity!" exclaimed Zerubbabel, and danced with ecstasy, till the farmer and his wife stared harder than ever.

"Ha! ye f'un' it out?" cried the farmer's wife: "Lord! maister Hubby, do tell us what ye think it is."

"A spur, good neighbours, a spur it is, no doubt, and hath belonged to some valorous Roman knight many ages ago," replied Hubby.

"Why, zowks, then, Bob was right," said the farmer; "and pray ye, Maister Hubby, accept a dozen o' pullets' eggs with it, for it is not worth having by itself."

Zerubbabel was of a very different opinion, but very thankfully received the eggs, notwithstanding; and his homely visitors bade him good afternoon.

And now did the deeply learned man retire into the very penetralia of reflection, and meditation, and thought, and consideration, and so forth; yet the "vasty cavern" of his mind displayed other and more profound concernments than admiration of the invaluable Roman spur. "*Noose-larnt*" — that was the singular word which riveted his thought. "Noose-larnt! — what could it mean? That was the great question which the great Zerubbabel asked of himself — for he knew no higher authority on such high matters — at least one hundred times before he went to bed; but he slept — answerless! Again, on the succeeding day — ay, and on the day succeeding that day — Hubby Dickinson pondered on the same profound problem; and, on the third night, when he had extended his cogitations to

the stroke of twelve, and his sole remaining candle was reduced to one inch of tallow, and four of black wick, curling through and through the struggling bit of flame, and spreading gloom rather than light over Hubby's little studium — then it was that Hubby Dickinson, feeling one thought go through him like a flash of lightning, suddenly sprang up, crying out, "Eureka — eureka!" and plucked an ancient volume from its shelf to satisfy himself of the correctness of his thought.

The searcher for enlightenment snuffed the candle with a speed and dexterity which few could equal, — performing the act with Nature's snuffers, his fingers, — feeling that the vastitude and urgency of the inquiry did not permit the delay of employing the aid of man's mechanic invention, — and then, and then — opening the ancient volume, and turning to the name he contemplated, and fixing his spectacles, once again, in the most advantageous position — the ardent and delighted antiquary read out aloud to himself the following passage from the said ancient tome: —

"Anaxagoras, the disciple of Anaximenes, was surnamed *Nous*, which signifieth *intelligence*, by reason of his excelling quickness of parts, and a certain, I know not what, of instant perception or discernment of nice difficulties in a twinkling. For whereas other wise men went round about to survey the questions to them proponed, on this side and that,

and, after much nice calculation and naming of postulates, drew from the balance of probabilities what they affirmed to be a correct answer, this philosopher manifested a strength and clearness of judgment, and swiftness of reasoning, which might be said to partake of intuition, — a faculty which the gods themselves only possess in its perfection: and thus it came to pass that Anaxagoras was called, in the Hellenistic tongue, *Nous*, or intelligence."

That was the passage he read; and when he had read it he closed the heavy quarto with a noise like the report of a gun, and again cried out that "he had found it" with all his power of lungs. And then, feeling that he had done business enough for one night, in having made so transcendentally-sagacious a discovery, he put out the small remnant of candle, groped his way to his bed-side, and, while he performed the prefatory work of unclothing, thus he soliloquised: —

"Yea, of a verity, this is the true interpretation of the mystery. This 'Noose-larnt' young man is some great natural genius, — some miracle of mother wit, — some second Anacharis the Scythian, who would very likely beat all the wise men of this time, although he never entered the pale of the schools, — nay, perhaps, hath never passed beyond the limits of the lordship of Hambleton-on-the-hill. I have no doubt of it; for none but such a genius could have determined, without witchcraft, that this curiously

shapen piece of ancient armour pertained to the heel. It is strange that my friend, the parson of Hambleton, — who must have given the young man this expressive epithet, seeing that the rural people understand no Greek, — it is strange that he never told me of the existence of this youth. But I will essay to find him out, if I be spared till the morning light! O Hubby Dickinson! though few now call you Zerubbabel, yet you may have lived to this age for a high purpose, even to bring to light the name and singular endowments of this 'Noose-larnt' youth! Why, the discovery may even ennoble you beyond the composition of the grand Tallagium!" And then Hubby fell asleep, and dreamt delightfully; but the delight itself, of his dream awoke him, and again he began to soliloquise amid the darkness: —

"Why, it is as clear and luminous as the sun at noon to my mind," he said to himself: "nothing less than the possession of a high degree of the faculty of intuition could have enabled this youth to announce such a truth. Verily, there is no wonder the rude peasant people entertain suspicions that he hath a familiar, or is a wizard: and that they do entertain such ideas is evident from that strange exclamation, or rather optation, of Gaffer Davy — he wished when the youth's last noose was tied he might find benefit o'clergy. There, is an allusion to the ancient privilege of escape from the halter by a

gave such strength and speed to his limbs that he soon reached the village.

"Pray, my good friend," said he to a farmer on horseback, as he entered the place, "can you say where I shall find the singularly endowed youth who is familiarly called Bob Rakeabout, the Noose-larnt?"

Poor Hubby! how he stared, and how loftily indignant he felt, when the farmer returned him a broad horse-laugh for an answer, and, setting spurs to his horse, rode away! He was not to be driven from his purpose, however, and put the same question to a pedestrian, next. The man, who was a ditcher with a shovel on his shoulder, touched, or rather nipped, his hat skirts, and asked what the gentleman said; and when he clearly understood that Bob Rakeabout was wanted, his reply was, that he knew not where he would be found, unless at the alehouse. Hubby thanked his informant, but was sure within himself that there was some mistake arising from the man's dulness, for it could not be that a genius of so magnificent a grade as the human being he was seeking could be found loitering in a vulgar alehouse. So on Hubby strode, looking at the ground, and thinking, and thinking, — till, at last, he was accosted by a very dark-visaged and singularly dressed man, who stood by a tent in a lane, on the other side of the village — for the thinker had passed [illegible] unconsciously.

a preliminary to the commencement of Hubby's journey to Hambleton, which, he was sure, would be memorable while the world lasted: it was — to give his scholars a holiday.

Reader, — talk of potentates by whatever name you will; but your schoolmaster is your only emperor! Can he not make laws — break laws — bind his subjects — set them free — and, in one word, do what he listeth? I tell thee, reader, that his is the true *imperium in imperio:* his will is law, and who can gainsay it? Thou knowest of no potentate so truly imperial as the village schoolmaster.

And Hubby Dickinson — had he not power in himself, and of himself — to give his boys a holiday? That he had; and when the word was given, ye powers! what a rush was there over benches, and what a scampering for hats; and then the huzza! when the threshold was passed and the plans for fun throughout the live-long day that were formed! Woe worth the world! one owes it a grudge, one is tempted to think, since it hath taken away from our lips the nectared chalice of childhood, and giveth us now, from day to day, no other draught but this unsavoury minglement, wherein one scarcely knows whether the bitterness or the insipidity most prevails!

It was but three short miles from Oakham to Hambleton; and Hubby Dickinson's eagerness of desire

huge black earthen bottle were passed about rather freely. Endless questions followed, and strange answers were given; and sometimes the gipsies stared, and at others they smiled, and often they were in danger of laughing outright.

At length the boy returned, and, behold! immediately afterwards Bob Rakeabout, the "Noose-larnt" himself, entered the tent! Hubby rose to receive him, bareheaded; but, he knew not how it was, it was somewhat difficult for him to stand, and so he sat down again. As for the great natural phenomenon himself, he stretched his brawny hand to each of the gipsies, and they shook it with remarkable good-humour. Then, seizing the black earthen bottle, he applied it to his mouth, without either using the horn or waiting for invitation to drink.

Hubby's thinkings were becoming somewhat confused; but he turned, inwardly, to the fact that Diogenes threw away his dish when he saw the boy drink out of his hand. "Of a verity, the youth is one of Nature's own miracles!" said he to himself.

Forthwith, Bob Rakeabout rakishly laughed as he took out a large pouch, composed of mole-skins, and filled with tobacco. He laid it open on the floor of the tent, filled his own short pipe from it, and the gipsies immediately followed his example. Hubby, as yet, had scarcely spoken to Bob; but when the whole company began to smoke, and the antiquary was again pressed to drink, for more than one reason

he quietly remarked that he much wished to converse with this youth alone.

"Oh, ay," replied the gipsy, whom Hubby had seen first, "Bob will have no objection to that: — you can show this gentleman some noose-larning, can't you, Bob?"

The gipsies tittered, — but Bob understood the question, — for much had been said by himself and the gipsies in the peculiar slang of their tribe, which Hubby had not comprehended.

"Take another horn, sir," said Bob; "and give us another ten minutes to smoke our pipes out, and I'll show ye some noose-larning, in a twink."

Hubby's head swum partly with pleasure, but much more with the strong ale, to which he was unused; but he drank off the other horn, in eager expectation of such a mental feast to follow it as he had never yet tasted.

"Come along wi' me, sir!" cried Bob, springing up, suddenly, at the end of less than ten minutes; "come along wi' me, and I'll show ye some noose-larning!"

"Are ye really off, Bob?" asked the gipsies, all together.

"Ay, ay," he answered, "kick up a roaster, and set on iron-jack against I come back."

Hubby thought this strange talk; but he had not time to think much about it, for Bob seized him by the hand, and away they scampered together over two

or three fields, and then entered a wood. And here Bob took from his pocket certain strange engines of wood and wire, and, showing Hubby the noose attached to each, planted them severally in little openings of bush or brake, while Hubby stared like one that was thunder-struck, for Bob only uttered one word — "Noose-larning!" and then, seizing Hubby by the arm, hurried him on again. At length, in the thickest part of the wood, Bob began to take up engines instead of putting them down — but, lo! there were dead hares attached to them.

And now poor Hubby Dickinson saw of what kind of mettle the "miracle of mother-wit" was made, and, taking to his heels, he ran from the poacher with as much haste as if a legion of fiends were behind him. Did the poacher follow? Not he, indeed. He only burst into hysterics of laughter, and then went on with his business.

And whither fled the antiquary? Indeed, he knew not; but, having emerged from the wood, he ran as long as the fumes of the strong malt-liquor in his brains permitted him to retain possession of the power of his feet; and, when they failed him, he fell souse into a ditch, which happened merely to contain mud instead of water, and remained there, insensible and asleep for the greater part of the time, till late in the afternoon.

As luck would have it, the parson of Hambleton, who was an old antiquarian crony of Hubby's, took

his afternoon walk in that direction, and, to his perfect amazement, found his erudite friend in the ditch.

"Noose-larning!" roared out Hubby, and shook and shuddered, when the parson had poked him with his walking-stick until he waked him: — "Noose-larning!" he still uttered, beholding the poacher in the wood, in his bewildered condition. With much ado, Hubby was at length fully brought to the remembrance of what he was about, and being by that time perfectly sober, — but dreadfully cramped, — he clambered out of the ditch; and though sorely ashamed of his bedaubed condition, and much more of his doating folly, he accompanied his friend to the parsonage-house at Hambleton, and, after much entreaty, with all the simplicity of his soul, recounted all he could remember of the whole adventure, commencing with Gaffer Davy's visit and the present of the Roman spur.

Oft was the hearty laugh of the plain Oakhamers raised at Hubby Dickinson's expense, during the remainder of his life; but the fine old fellow's adventure never lessened their esteem for him. He was never permitted to want, even when age had stiffened his limbs and almost totally closed his eyes and ears. Town and country were alike proud of the learning that he had possessed; and the villages, especially, believed that his like would never be seen in Rutland again, even to the day of judgment.

In the lapse of a few months, Hubby got over the shame and soreness of mind created by his adventure so entirely, as to be able to relish a joke about it; and, when his lamp of life was quivering and ready to sink, nothing would so soon cause it to blaze up with a healthy and cheerful light as a joke about the "noose-larning" — unless it were a grave and respectful mention of the "Tallagium illustrissimum." But the lamp of that life went out at last, though its exit from mortality was peaceful and gentle as the sinking to sleep of a babe; and never yet has "the like" been seen in little Rutland, for wondrous learning, of Master Zerubbabel Dickinson.

THE BEGGARED GENTLEMAN,

AND

HIS CROOKED STICK.

THERE is not a sight in the world more distressful to the bosom that retains any measure in it of "the milk of human kindness" than that of an abject, poverty-stricken fellow-creature, who once rolled in wealth and plenty. Even the born beggar, who has lived a beggar all his life, feels an involuntary compassion for such a man. And, if his fall be attributable to no avaricious spirit of speculation, or proud and sensual excess — but is the effect of Fortune's untoward frown, or the result of what the selfish world calls an imprudent practice of relieving the distressed, the "beggared gentleman" is surely a legitimate object of universal commiseration.

"Poor Mr. Clifford!" the most ragged and hungry inhabitant of Kirton-in-Lindsey would exclaim, "how much he is to be pitied! — I never thought to see him come to this!" And when the subject of this general pity happened to let fall his

curious crooked stick through infirmity of age, there was not a poor man or woman in the little town but would hasten to restore it to him who seemed to regard it as the most prizeable possession he had left in the world. It was moving to see the instant act of ceremonious courtesy to which the recipient of this simple heart-kindness would resort. He would raise his hat, and smile with the same polite expression of thankfulness as in his best days. No one who saw him could forget that he had been a gentleman. And yet the home of his old age was one of squalid misery!

Hugh Clifford's father was a descendant, by a younger branch, of a noble family, and had gained a considerable fortune as a merchant in the port of Hull. He died in the beginning of the reign of George the Third, and left his accumulated wealth to his only son, who was then at college. Hugh hastened home, on the sudden death of his father, and, by the advice of a few friends, resolved to carry on his father's mercantile concern. Twelve months, however, served to disgust him with business. His wealth, instead of augmenting, began rapidly to decrease under the peculations of clerks and managers, to whom the business was necessarily entrusted, and he took the resolution, ere it was too late, of retiring, after he had disposed of his "concern," to a pretty little estate which had fallen to him, by his mother's right, at the pleasant little rural town of Kirton-in-

Lindsey, that like "a city set on a hill" delights the eye of the traveller for miles before he reaches it.

For many years, Hugh Clifford's house was a general refuge for the distressed. None ever knocked at his gate, and told a tale of want, but they found instant relief. Hugh Clifford's heart was expansive as Nature herself. He felt that all men were his brethren, and that, if he merely tendered them lip-kindness when they were in sorrow, it was but mockery. He pondered over the precepts and history of the Great Exemplar, until, nature and reason combining to stimulate him, his whole life became an effort to banish the misery of human-kind. And yet the sphere in which he acted was comparatively narrow; for his natural intelligence was not of that high order which marks out for itself extended fields of enterprize in philanthropy. Hugh Clifford could not be termed a planet, like Howard, that visited widely distant climes in its great dispensing orbit of goodness; but he was most veritably a star of benevolence, that cheered with a pure and genial light all within its neighbourhood who partook of woe and wretchedness.

Living, by his charity, in the very core of poor men's hearts, and respected for his true politeness and urbanity by his wealthier neighbours, Hugh Clifford, while he rendered others happy, was believed to be himself a very happy man. Nevertheless, for twenty years after he had passed the

prime of age, discomfort and distress were gradually stealing upon him; and these, too, from a source which was almost entirely unsuspected by the majority of his neighbours. True, it was sometimes remarked that fox-eyed lawyer Merrick was often, very often, at Clifford cottage, — and this was considered to be anomalous, since Hugh Clifford's acquaintances had been uniformly chosen for some quality which distinguished them in the little town and its neighbourhood, as benefactors rather than oppressors of the poor: albeit lawyer Merrick was notoriously of the latter description of character. A few shrewd, hard-bargaining farmers also made a notch in their memories, now and then, that lawyer Merrick's purchases of odd bits of land were becoming frequent now he seemed to be so very oft a visitor at good Mr. Clifford's.

Notwithstanding these slight precurses of suspicion, it came, at length, upon the ears of the Kirton people, poor and rich together, like the shock of an earthquake, that "poor good old Mr. Clifford was turned bodily out of doors, with nothing but the clothes on his back and his favourite crooked stick in his hand, a complete pauper, for that he had been getting into lawyer Merrick's debt for years and years, by borrowing small sums upon his estate, whereby all he was worth was mortgaged to the lawyer, who had now suddenly foreclosed, and pounced upon house

and land, pushing good old Mr. Clifford away, by the shoulders!"

"Poor Mr. Clifford!" was echoed by every body; —but who helped "poor Mr. Clifford?"

There lay the hardest fact in the good man's history. The little tradesmen who had shared his daily orders for the relief of the miserable had none of them more than five pounds in their books against him; but each of them made out a bill of thrice the amount of their debt, and so figured in the world's compassion as great losers by the "beggared gentleman," instead of ingrates, when they shut their doors against him. The farmers shook their heads, and buttoned up their fobs, saying, "It was no wonder that all was over with Mr. Clifford: he ought to have remembered that, 'Charity begins at home.'" The parish parson, who was the prime whip of the neighbourhood, and spent more days of the year with 'Squire Harrison's hounds than he spent in his pulpit and study, thrice told, only struck his top-boots violently with his whip, and said, "God bless me! I always thought the poor fellow was cracked in his upper story! Why, he must have meant to end his days in an alms-house, or he would not have undertaken to keep all the poor in my parish and the surrounding parishes to boot!" and, springing into the stirrups, was out of sight in a minute.

And into an alms-house poor Hugh Clifford went, but not until he had wandered through the little

town three or four times, leaning upon his curious crooked stick, and looking as if unconscious of the crowd of tearful poor men and women that followed him. At first, the parish overseers waited, in the expectation that, as a matter of course, either the parson or some of the "better sort of people" would invite the "beggared gentleman" into their houses; but when it was seen that no such invitation was given, while, all the time, the poor fallen man was wandering in the street with derangement manifest in his looks, the puzzled overseers laid their heads together, and agreed that one of the alms-houses should be apportioned for Mr. Clifford's home, and that an old deaf female pauper should be put under the same roof to wait upon him.

For many days the poor victim to his own goodness was silent and helpless, and, by order of the parish surgeon, was disturbed, on the rugged bed where he lay, no oftener than was necessary to arouse him in order that he might be fed; for his mental powers seemed to have undergone so complete a paralysis as to render him insensible to the calls of nature. After the lapse of some weeks, during the latter half of which he seemed to be absorbed in abstract devotion, poor Hugh Clifford's mind rallied. And now the meekness with which he bore his adversity was equally remarkable with the perfectness of that pity he had evermore displayed for the wretched during the term of his prosperity. He

accepted the smallest act of kindness with gratitude; and the poor deaf old female pauper never knew what it was to hear him utter a word of complaint.

The remnant of his life may be summed up in a few lines. All who had the means of ameliorating his lot neglected him; and all who wished for the means, and had hearts to have used them in his relief, lacked them. He lived years in his beggared condition, and died calmly and quietly, complaining of nothing in the world, nor of the world itself, and leaving but one request, — that his curious crooked stick might be placed by his right side, in his coffin, and buried with him!

The deaf old female pauper who had waited on him did not fail to communicate this strange request to the parish overseers when they came to look at Hugh Clifford's corpse, prior to giving orders for his burial. It may be guessed that the singular request gave rise to much wonder and some enquiry. But the old female could only answer that the good gentleman would often place his odd-looking walking-stick in the corner, and sit on his bedside looking very intently upon it; and that often he would turn the other side of it to the wall, and then sit and look at it again; and several times she had seen him take a little note-book from his coat pocket, at the breast, and write in it, looking, ever and anon, at the curious crooked stick.

The latter part of the old female's communication

of course occasioned a search. The pocket-book was found, and in it a paper covered with a close manuscript of a most curious character, but one that served to display the anatomy of poor Hugh Clifford's heart under his misfortunes more fully than it could have been laid open and read in either deathbed confession, or funeral sermon. It ran as follows: —

"*A Soliloquy on my only faithful and never-failing friend, — my beloved and valued crooked stick.*

"Ay, there thou art, — my own crooked stick! — My heart cleaves to thee, in thy crookedness; and I love thus to look upon thee, more and more, daily, as thou leanest by the wall in that corner, — remembering that thou and I were not always tenants of an alms-house.

"I love to look upon thee, with a melancholy yet pleasurable love, beholding that thou preservest thy crooked identity, — yea, remainest as crooked as ever thou wert! I know not whether aught within me, or, indeed, any thing but thyself without me, be still the same as on that beautiful summer eve when, more than fifty years ago, I cut thee from the venerable crab-tree whereon thou didst grow, and we formed our inseparable friendship.

"The wise men of this age would tell me that not a particle of the body I had then, at nineteen, is to be found in this old body of threescore and ten, —

but that blood, bone, brains, and all its other youthful components, are changed. I know not, my dear crooked crab-stick, how truly they may speak; but this I know, — that I then was proud of a perfect and spotless array of teeth, while, now, my old gums are tenantless; that then my eyes were sharp and strong, while now I see, with the utmost difficulty, objects removed half a yard from my nose; that then my ears were instruments of use, and porches for receiving the brain's most precious visitants, the sounds of music, — while, now, they only serve to plague me when I see people's lips moving, and think, like other old fools, that folks are always talking about me; and, that I used to have 'a handsome head of hair,' as my barber always called it, on quarter-day, when he expected his salary, — while, now, I behold a perpetual winter above my brow, and on my brow itself!

"But, ah! my faithful friend, why should I lament the changes which have come upon me? Fate, or Fortune, or whatever power I might fancifully charge with my evil day, cannot avenge herself of me so bitterly as she might, — if I had teeth to be set on edge with inferior food, — eyes to be offended with the rude shapes of this straw mattrass and rush-bottomed chair, — ears to be tormented with the jangling of earthen porringers, as the poor deaf old woman knocks them against each other, — and hair which I could not dress for lack of a mirror!

"And then, as to my inner man, good lack, my beloved crooked crab-stick! though thou remainest the same, how is this my inner man changed! ay, how hath it changed and changed again, since our first dear friendship was formed! Yet I said in my heart, once, that my mind could never change in its regard for what I was pleased to call 'certain great principles!' Alack! I have lived to feel uncertain about the certainty and greatness of almost all principles! and ——

"But stop! how is this, that having taken thee into my hand, I begin, just now, to question the reality of thy crookedness? Art thou really so very, very crooked, my dearly beloved stick?

"There! I place thee, again, in thy own corner, that so thou mayst lean against thy own spot in the wall, and lo! thy crookedness is made, once more, fully manifest! No, no, my friend — for Hugh Clifford loves thee too well and sincerely to call himself thy 'master,' and think of thee as of a slave! — no, no, it is too late in life for the 'beggared gentleman' to deceive himself — thou *art* crooked, crooked indeed!

"But ah! my beloved stick, it is for thy crookedness I love thee, above all, though not for it alone. I avow to thee, as I have often avowed, in times past, when no human ear heard me, that I thank thee, my faithful, crooked, unfailing friend, for all thy service. Twice, when wielded by my right arm,

didst though enable me to deliver a weak fellow-creature from his stronger, who would have slain him because he had not filthy gold or silver to satisfy the robber: ten times didst thou empower me to wrest open the cottage doors of dying human beings deserted by their kind, and unable to arise and welcome their deliverer: nay, once didst thou enable me to preserve my own poor life when the plunderer who now possesseth my house and land would have secretly and bloodily taken it!

"What though it bringeth some sorrow to remember the angelic face and form I saw, for the last time, but an hour before I cut thee from thy parent tree? Ah! how well doth life assort the lot of its inheritors, even when they most deeply repine! The sea devoured my Mary — my beauty, my only love, and I repined that she was not spared to share my riches and possessions; alas! would she not have had to share my lot, also, in this alms-house? Indeed, my friend, I was blessed that I gained thy friendship that night, when my love was taken from me, for how great a comfort hast thou been to me!

"I tender thee these my heartfelt thanks, now our long and interesting friendship is in the yellow leaf! Many a mile hast thou travelled with me, — unfailingly hast thou supported my steps in manhood and old age, — in all weathers, — and never shrunk from me, nor upbraided either my haste or my tarrying, my speed or my slowness, my lavishness or my

poverty; but Hugh Clifford cannot expect, in the nature of things, to remain with thee much longer. He loves thee so well, that he would fain thou mightst be laid by his side in the grave: yet such a request may be met churlishly by those who provide Hugh's coffin, — and thou mayst become the support of another, who will, peradventure, proudly call thee his 'property' instead of his 'companion!'"

"Farewell, then, my dearly-beloved and highly valued friend — farewell! but not before I have more fully thanked thee: ——

"Above all, my precious crooked stick, I return thee hearty thanks that thou hast been to me a truthful mirror — yea, a bright and glittering looking-glass, — although the eye of the undiscerning, and of those who judge after the outward seeming and surface appearance, would misreckon thee to be a dry, dull, opaque crooked crab-stick! Yea, a mirror, I say, thou hast been to me, — reflecting upon my spiritual retina, — the judgment, — that great fact, which, in my folly, I oft would have hidden from myself, — that I resembled thee!

"Yet, thou pitiedest me in thy heart, — hard and unfeeling as some would say that heart must be, the heart of a crooked crab-stick! — yea, thou pitiedst me therein, and didst still from thy old corner regard me with the same unflatteringly argumentative and admonitory aspect, — penetrating *my* heart with

the faithful language of *thine:* 'Hugh! look at me and know thyself.'

"And I *have* looked at thee, and I do *now* look at thee, and in thy veritable crookedness I behold my own!"

"Reader,—who wilt find this my solemn and earnest soliloquy, when I am gone,—hast thou a crooked stick?

"'I, Mr. Clifford!' answers some young puppy of one-and-twenty, who, perchance, may take my paper into his dainty fingers, 'I am not so vulgar as to carry a crooked stick: my cane is most beautifully polished, and it is a perfectly straight one!'"

"Pshaw! my brave lad! I sought not thy answer: do not be so pert: think more, and talk less, for the next thirty years; and then re-consider my question.

"'I understand your censorious query, Mr. Clifford,' says another, some score of years older, and with less buckram but more gauze in his composition—'I understand you: but the fact is, *my* stick is *not* a crooked stick: it is perfectly straight, and hath always been straight: 'tis the evil-disposed and calumnious world who call it crooked: albeit, if they would only view it aright, they would perceive that all the parts of it which they think crooked and perverse are direct as a geometrical right line!'

"Alas, my reader with the pretended straight stick! thou pratest in vain to Hugh Clifford, the 'beggared

gentleman!' I tell thee, plainly, thy stick is, like mine, a crooked one; nay, I tell thee, that every man's stick is but a crooked stick. And, of all curses under which this poor abused world groans, may it be speedily and effectually delivered, I pray, in my old age and in an alms-house, from the cant of the starched faces who assure their fellow-creatures with so much show of sanctity that their crooked sticks are straight ones!

"Farewell, then, once again, my beloved but crooked friend, and thanks for thy faithfulness! alas, that I neglected to use thy silent admonitions as I ought to have used them, when the serpent who wrecked me was wont to shed his false tears while I related my tales of the poor in his ears! Fool that I was to take those tears, and the offers to lend more money that followed, for proofs of his feeling heart! Ah, my friend, had I to spend life again, I would attend more closely to thy monitions, and would not credit a man's professions of humanity, unless they cost him something! But it is too late to repent at what I fear I could not have avoided if I had even seen my error.

"Let it pass! Hugh Clifford's heart danceth for joy, even amidst the squalor of an alms-house, that he can point to no inconsiderable portion of his life, and say with truth regarding it, as one said of old — 'When the ear heard me, then it blessed me: and when the eye saw me it gave witness to me:

because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.'—

"Yet see I my image in thine, my dear faithful friend! my stick is but a crooked one, though I have done some little good in my life! Ostentation hath mixed itself, more or less, with my purest charities,—anger hath too often burned in my bosom till the morning light: I have not always 'done as I would be done by;' I have too often behaved contemptuously to my fellow-creatures, forgetting that I was but a poor, pitiful earth-worm, like themselves. I am but a *crooked* stick, like thee, my beloved friend, with all my imagined excellency.

"But, finally, I thank thee, that thou hast perseveringly shown me that I was not perfect: thou hast preserved me from self-deceit, or at least hast chased it away, when it hath led me into temporary captivity.

"Farewell, then, my beloved crooked stick!—and if he who, first or last, readeth this my serious soliloquy feeleth inclined to laugh thereat, let him answer my question, when I ask him if *he* be able to point to one human thing that hath been to him what thou hast been to me—*for fifty years, an ever-faithful and never-failing friend?*"

THE NURTURE OF A YOUNG SAILOR; OR, THE HISTORY OF COCKLE TOM.

Cockle Tom was born in poverty, cradled in hardship, and schooled, never in the alphabet, but perpetually in endurance of labour, hunger, and fatigue. His manhood was brief; but his death was generous and heroic. He was one of the humble children of genuine romance, which England produces in profusion, but whose lives are unchronicled, and the moral of their story lost, simply from the fact that, though full of virtuous ambition, they are untainted with vain-glory: they neither seek for notice in cities, nor lay claim to distinction in public assemblies; but they restlessly seek to obtain and preserve the reputation that they are hard-workers, undaunted by any danger, and capable of sustaining any amount of fatigue, or undertaking any risk, even that of life itself, to benefit the existence or preserve the life of a fellow-creature. Such is genuine Saxon character — genuine old English nature: what elements for useful greatness in a nation, if its rulers were

Alfreds! But to proceed with our humble biography: —

Cockle Tom was born at Northcotes-on-the-Sands, a slender, straggling village, bleakly situate on the Lincolnshire sea-coast, and at no great distance from the mouth of the Humber. His father was a simple fisherman, who rented the "cockle sands," as they were called, — an extent of something more than a mile, belonging to the parish of Northcotes, and possessed in fee-simple by the principal landholder in the neighbourhood. Having married young, and being early the head of a numerous small family, Tom's father, from the penury of his condition, was constrained to introduce every one of his male children, at least, to the rough and painful labour of gathering cockles on the sea-beach by the time they had reached the tender age of five years. And at that age was Tom first taken, by his elder brothers, without shoes or stockings, with a bundle of rags rather than clothes around him, and a red flannel night-cap tied fast round his head, to gather the shell-fish, by scraping them out of the sand with his little hands, and putting them into a small hempen bag tied round his loins. Little Tom was very eager to go; — for "the sea! the sea!" was his unvarying song (chanted in a wild, untaught melody which perhaps even Neükomm himself would have thought beautiful, could he have listened to it) from the day when he was three years old, the first day on

which his father bore him on shoulder to gaze upon the ships riding in the German Ocean. But poor little Tom cried bitterly with frozen hands, and cold, and hunger, before the day was over, and it was time to return to his mother's aproned knee, and the soothing heaven of sympathy that dwelt on her tongue and in her eyes.

Yet, on the morrow, little Tom would go again. The father would have left him at home till the Spring strengthened and the sun came nearer, for it was but early March as yet; but the little adventurer was too true to his nature to accept the boon. And from that day, summer and winter, except when even the father himself was compelled to stay at home by reason of an unusual storm, Tom continued to mount his little red night-cap, like the rest, and make one among the picturesque line of industrious stragglers on the sea-beach. To school Tom never went in his life: though his lot would not have been more highly favoured in that respect, had he been the child of a peasant in the interior, or even the son of a decent mechanic in Lincolnshire, at that period, — for we are speaking of events of seventy years' date, from their commencement to our own time, — and at that far-back period the idea of sending a poor man's child to school was regarded as a piece of overweening pride that deserved no gentle rebuke from "the better sort of people." But what though he could never read? he could make boats; and indeed

his earliest error was a display of that kind of ingenuity, for he bored a hole in the bottom of his mother's bread-tin when but four years' old, stuck a wooden mast in it, fitted on a sail, and set it afloat on the surface of a brook that ran by the end of his father's little garden; and, while he clapped his little hands in ecstasy, away dashed his ship to the sea! He was severely chidden for this, but *not* flogged: that was not his mother's way; she happened to have too much good sense to brutify her offspring: and the lecture served to shew him that he had done foolishly,—but it did not annihilate that passion for ships and the sea which his first sight of them had created within him. He could make boats — did we say? ay, and he made a ship, too, — such a ship! — though this was when he was ten years old, and had seen the magnificent merchant-vessels from the Mediterranean and the West Indies go by in full sail for the Humber and the port of Hull, — such a ship, with masts, and yards, and rigging, and port-holes, and even miniature sailors, — it was so wondrous a piece of art as the oldest villager in Northcotes had never seen, and rendered little Tom the every-day talk of all its inhabitants. Such talk did not render little Tom vain, however, for his yearning mind had influenced his hands to form the ship from no principle of praise-seeking: it was a type that signified he meant to sail in such an ocean-vehicle — if the simple people could so have read it.

Unmindful of praise, and true to the energy that was growing within him, little Tom learnt to swim, and dive, and play with the huge ocean as familiarly as with his elder brothers. More especially if a vessel chanced to anchor near the shore, either to wait for a change of wind, or to barter for fish, that was a temptation so powerful with Tom, that he seldom waited for his father's return, if at a distance with the boat, — but into the wave he would plunge, and speedily gain the vessel, becoming, in a few minutes, a favourite with every one on board, for his sense and activity. Tom's brothers shared the pleasure, or at least the benefits, of these ventures, though they were neither skilful nor courageous enough to share the peril; for little Tom usually returned, bearing by the strings in his mouth, like a water dog, his cockle-bag filled with precious scraps of sea-biscuit, and sometimes a bit or two of boiled salt beef, — a priceless luxury for the brothers, to whom noble little Tom invariably gave up the bag, as soon as he reached the shore.

By the time that Tom was regularly entered as one of his poor father's labouring band, the strongest of his three elder brothers was taken by the father, into the little boat, taught to assist in managing the bladdered nets, and so advanced from a mere cockle-gatherer to an embryo fisherman. The two next brothers were neither sufficiently strong, active, or enterprising, ever to rival the oldest; but when Tom was ten years old, though Jack was fifteen, his father

preferred taking him in the boat. The little hero not only gained greater knowledge, but rapidly grew in courage, presence of mind, and plan for adventure, by the change. In fact, the father's circumstances were speedily bettered by his child's intelligence and energy.

One day, while his father was "dealing" the largest net out of the boat, so as to prevent its getting "foul," and little Tom was riding upon the old horse which the father was necessitated to keep for his daily use, towing the end of the net by a line to the required distance into the water, he perceived that he was among an unusually large shoal of fine fish, — and so swam the horse out, considerably, with the intent to have a full sweep of the treasure. Much to the lad's chagrin, however, the father hallooed, and motioned, and menaced, for him to come back; and so Tom, who was too true a lad to disobey when his father seemed so angry, was constrained to give up his prize, and the result was that the father had to meet his usual chapman for the Louth market with only a very pitiful take of fish for the day. Tom was then but twelve years old, but his shrewdness discerned how greatly these timid acts of his father served to gird in the hungry family with straitness. He had never disobeyed on a large scale before; but his spirit prompted him to what, according to his unschooled casuistry, he conceived to be a virtuous disobedience, now — and yet it was a venturous and

perilous deed for a child that he undertook. And thus he went about it.

He drew his mother aside, as soon as they returned home in the evening, and dazzled her imagination with his brilliant and excited account of the value and fineness of the shoal he had seen, and told her he was resolved to have them before the next morning.

"The Lord help thee, bairn!" exclaimed the mother; "what art thou talking of?"

"Talking sense, mother," said Tom; "and you'll see it: for you must sit up till Jack and I come back with the old horse: we'll set off as soon as my fayther has gone to bed and fallen fast asleep."

"Jack!" cried the mother, "why, it 'll make him tremble to talk o' such a thing!"

"The more's the shame for him, then," replied the little hero; "if he does tremble, and durst not go, I shall think him a lubber"—a word that Tom had learnt from the sailors, and, of course, was very fond of using: "the moon's at full, and we can see as well as by daylight to manage the net."

"Thou'lt be drownded, bairn," said the mother; "and, besides, the fish may be all gone from where thou saw 'em this morning."

"Not they," insisted Tom; "they 're brits, mother,—fine large brits," he repeated, with sparkling eyes; "and you 've heard my fayther say over and over again that flat fish stay in a snug bottom for days together. I saw 'em spread all along the far flat,

within the sunk rocks, toward Donna Hook: they 've found fine shelter, and plenty to feed on, no doubt, and they won't go away; they'll make pounds, mother — and we need money, you know, mother."

Tom's mother gazed at him with fond wonder: so much ardour, so much earnest zeal to benefit his parents, and brothers and sisters, in one so young — it was almost too much for her, and the tears rose, as she stood silently looking at her child, with one hand on his shoulder, and his eager, entreating eyes penetrating into her very soul to learn whether he would win her consent. He prevailed, however, and she heard the last footsteps of the old horse, as it slowly left the door of the cottage, with Tom and Jack on its back, and the net packed behind, with feelings of excited apprehension she had not felt since the first storm after her marriage, when her husband was out at sea.——

"What's that?" asked the father, half awaking at the sound of the horse's feet, and wondering that his wife was still up; but she rendered him some evasive answer, and continued darning one of the children's rent garments, telling him that she must have it done for the boy to put on in the morning. Leaving the reader to imagine the mother's agonising doubts and fears, and anxious listenings to the movement of every changeful sound of the night, let us attend to Tom and his brother, and their daring adventure. Not that it needs any expanded description,

— for it was entered upon, and achieved, with all Tom's soul thrown into it, in such a way as to render it memorable to Jack's latest day, when Jack told it to his children. Jack was fearful enough at remaining alone in the boat to hand out the net by moonlight, — but Tom was dashing along on the old horse that was a good swimmer, and was not long in doubling and returning. Again and again was their swoop of the sea repeated, till their strength was well-nigh exhausted with toiling to carry on land their loads of fish. A mighty harvest from the great waters it was, to be reaped by the energy and intrepidity of a boy of twelve years old. The fish were concealed in a "crike" or small freshet, a little removed from the beach, where it was easy to form a dam; and with one good load upon the old horse, fastened in the folded net, the lads set off on foot, long before daylight, from the beach, and speedily were at their father's cottage-door with this earnest of their booty.

"Whoa-hoa!" cried Tom aloud to the old horse, almost before it was time to stop; and his mother, who was already in front of her cottage, lifted up her closed hand, and shook it, and cried, "Hush, bairn, — whisht, whisht! — thy fayther will hear thee, and what's to be done then?"

But Tom was neither to be hushed nor whished. "Tell my fayther to get up, and take Dick and Will with him to fetch the rest o' the brits and rays, while Jack and I have some breakfast, for we are

hungry above a bit," he said; and he tumbled the fish out of the net, and told his mother they had left ten times as many in the crike. What cared Tom whether his father felt inclined to scold or not? He knew that the booty would silently and overwhelmingly plead his pardon. And oh, the trembling joy and pride of the poor mother, — her thoughts of large pecuniary relief and admiration of her child's noble act, combining, and causing her to prattle with so much elation that she scarcely knew what she said!

Seven pounds, in sterling English money, Tom's poor father made of his child's night adventure: a sum he had never approached for one day's, no, nor one week's labour in his little boat, since he had possessed it. Need it be said that Tom's father was proud of him? He loved all his children: they and his wife were his jewels, his only idols in the world; and to picture truly his yearnings for their happiness, as he cast a thought towards his cottage, or counted his boys by their little red caps, toiling, meanwhile, afar off from the beach where the children straggled sometimes at great distances from each other, at their hardy employ, — to tell what truly exalted thinkings passed hourly through the mind of that poor fisherman, tossed upon the surge often a whole day without a fragment of gain, and yet clinging with glowing love to his wife and children on land, — oh, it would form a theme to kindle the sweetest eloquence of the gentle

yet godlike Shakspere himself! But it was natural that Tom should become his father's peculiar pride, for he was, indeed, a child to be proud of.

It was, therefore, a melancholy sound, the first request of that heroic boy, when he became fourteen — a sorrowful note in the ears of his doting parents — that he might become a sailor, and leave them! The father and mother exchanged a dreary look, and said nought. It was a request they might expect, one day or other, for the lad had always raved about the darling life of a sailor, and he was now becoming of an age when it was fit he should enter on such a profession as he intended to follow for life: but yet they had always put the thought aside, and clung to the enjoyment of possessing such a son, and beholding him as "the light of their eyes," daily. Tom saw and felt what his parents endured when he presented his first request, and he did not renew it till another month had flown, and a Boston sloop was lying off the cockle-sands, laden with timber from Hull, when he again asked if he might go for a sailor. This time, however, the question was put under circumstances which seemed to soften the dread of separation. Boston was a Lincolnshire port, and a voyage thither and back, on trial, would soon be performed, so that they would soon see their darling again; and therefore his parents gave consent for Tom's departure.

The boy became as much the darling of the little

crew in the sloop, during their brief voyage, as he had been of his father and mother. They gave him the name which stuck to him through life, as soon as they had heard his history, to which, indeed, they were scarcely strangers, for it was not the first time he had been on board their shallop. And "Cockle Tom" was proud to tell his new name when he saw his home again: it had been given him by sailors, and it was, therefore, more honourable in his estimation than knighthood or nobility given by a monarch would have been, had he known of either.

There was now no putting off the complete separation from their noblest child for Tom's parents. He had fully made up his mind to live on the sea, his darling element: and, besides, he had been to Hull, the port to which the Boston sloop traded, and had seen the Greenland whale-ships, and talked with the sailors till he was all excitement for the noble daring of joining in an attack upon the vast sea-monsters, and seeing the mountain icebergs, and hearing the roaring of the white bears. His father therefore prepared clothing for the lad, and began to think of setting out with him for Hull, in order to see him safely committed, as a sailor-apprentice, to the care of some kind and fatherly sort of Greenland captain.

It was a dull week that young Cockle Tom passed at home; for, despite his enthusiasm, the complete separation from his parents was a thought that cut

him to the quick. Did, then, the fisherman's child, who had been led forth to endure the cold sea wind, and labour, and hunger, from infancy, love his parents? Ay, that did he, and with such a love as you know nothing of, young spruce, who have been to boarding-school, and have since become versed in all the hollownesses of "respectable life." If there was a sacred corner in Tom's heart, it was that where the precious images of his father and mother were enshrined. Toil, fatigue, hunger, pain, loss of sleep, nay, death itself, he would have encountered at any moment to benefit them; and, young as he was, he formed strong judgments on men's characters who failed in parental duty. He never swore but once in his life, before leaving home, and that was when a young farmer in the parish married a flaunting wife, and gave up his aged father, blind and palsy-stricken, to be placed in an alms-house. "D—n his eyes!" exclaimed young Tom, while his own eyes flashed fire, "I should like to grapple his weasand, as big as he is!" That was a rude expression, and a strange one, too, for a boy of fourteen; but while his mother reproved it with such a look as she had never given him before, — and he blushed like scarlet, and promised, with tears in his eyes, never to swear again, — yet she read within Tom's heart, by the aid of those few syllables, the existence of a principle which, she felt, more truly ennobled

her child than the highest earthly titles would have aggrandised him.

It was some relief to young Tom to reflect that his parents were now in comparatively comfortable circumstances, and chiefly through his means. The ice of timidity once broken, Jack had become more adventurous, and within one year, by the joint efforts of the two brothers, so great an increase took place in the fish the father had to offer for sale, that he was enabled to buy the little cottage in which he lived, with the garden adjoining, as well as to clothe his whole family. The next year furnished a new and larger boat, and an extra horse, besides stocking the little purse of the father with a few spare guineas in gold — the noble old spade-aces which "looked so much like *real* money," as our forefathers used to say, when they first saw the queer, "fly-away-blow-away" paper money.

Did they cry — Tom, or his mother — when the separation came? Ay, and brothers, and sisters, and father too, as he was about to depart with him — real tears, to be sure; for, as much like their native oaks as our genuine old English race were in their hardihood and endurance of storms, their hearts were of the tenderest — in the right place. A still severer feeling of desolation was experienced by Tom and his father when they parted at Hull; but Tom "girt up the loins of his mind," and buried his sor-

row in listening to the sailors' talk, and in thinking of his coming adventures.

And now "the history of Cockle Tom" may end; for our purpose is not to write a long story, but to show how a simple and yet truly noble character may be formed: and that purpose is accomplished as well as we are able to reach it. For the remainder of Cockle Tom's life, — it was that of the true English sailor, — full of generosity and noble daring, shaded, here and there, with a dash of passion, or a fit of insobriety at the end of a long voyage of suffering, but tinted to brilliancy with many an act of exalted sacrifice. Five voyages Cockle Tom made to Greenland, or the Straits; three to the West Indies, and one to the East; six times he passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and visited Malta, or Corfu, or Constantinople; and four times he voyaged to the Guinea coast, ere he reached the age of thirty. That was the limit of his life; but he had saved as many lives as he numbered years by that time. As an expert swimmer, — as a soul that would venture even into the jaws of death to save a drowning man, — as a shipmate that would always take the severer share of toil and ease another, — as an agile and clever mariner that was unexcelled in the rapidity and perfection with which he could execute any manœuvre in the management of his ship, — as the heart of fun and merriment, — and as the lad whose purse was ever at the command of a brother in need, — Cockle Tom

was the glory and pride of every "true British tar" who knew him.

And how fresh did his filial love remain amidst separation and newness of scene! His father and mother kept that sacred corner in his heart, perfectly unrivalled, for many a long year; and when he admitted another fair image there it was not allowed to encroach upon the consecrated room occupied by the old ones. He loved his wife, whom he married at five-and-twenty, and she deserved his love; but he did not love his parents the less for that. They received many a solid proof of his affection, although they seldom saw him; and the news of his death, though it did not distract them with unseemly grief, dimmed the brightness of their declining days.

Cockle Tom lay in harbour at Hull, after his return from the fourth Guinea voyage: his vessel was delivered of its cargo: a friend had written "home" for him, — for his father's cottage was "home" with him, even after he had married and had a little neat house in Hull. On the morrow, his young wife and himself were to have set out to see his aged parents once more, when, in the fineness of the evening, while numerous pleasure-boats were jostling each other in the narrow space of the harbour, thronged as it was with large and small craft, one boat upset, and five human lives were in danger. In a moment, Tom had plunged from the deck where

he stood, and the next moment had placed two in safety in one of the boats: a second struggle, and two more were rescued; but, in attempting to save the last, the dying struggler, or the cramp, overpowered him, and he sunk to rise no more! Such was the consistent end of the life of Cockle Tom, — the "true British sailor."

"A bold peasantry, their country's pride," are fast fading: may our other twin jewel in English national character — the noble sailor — ever preserve its lustre!

THE

LAST DAYS OF AN OLD SAILOR;

OR,

"BUTTER YOUR SHIRT! SING TANTARA-BOBUS, MAKE SHIFT!"

AMONG the few survivors of our "glorious" sea-fights which the Peace sent home to Gainsbro', a busy little port on the Trent, was old Matthew Hardcastle, a veteran of threescore and ten, and something more. It was said that Matthew might have been discharged from ship-board some years earlier; but his attachment to the sea was extreme, and he was at length, to speak plainly, forced out of the navy.

Gainsbro' was, at that particular period, somewhat fertile in the production of eccentric folk, for Joe Hornby was then to be seen in it, with his hat stuck full of field flowers, and sometimes, to the peril of its "crown," fixed on his head wrong side upwards, because "the world was turned upside down;" and the septuagenarian spinster, Nelly Fish, might be seen flaunting along the narrow causeway, her strange pile of five or six straw hats, which she wore one upon another, to show that "she knew all the fashions

that had been, as well as those that were;"—and Martin Jackson would, ever and anon, sally forth in some old guise that demonstrated his lunacy; for to-day he might be seen covered with papers on which were written all kinds of queer criticisms on the rulers of the day, and to-morrow he would go through the streets clad in his wife's chemise for an outer robe, and wearing an old horseman's helmet with a fox's tail for a plume, while half-a-dozen terriers yelped away at his heels, following thick and fast to the mad hunter's cries of "Yo-ho! yo-ho! Hark forward! Tantivy! Yo-ho! yo-ho!"

Such were some of the strange relics of humanity which afforded grave problems for those who were able to moralise, or thought they were, at that time, in Gainsbro'; but, amidst all and sundry of its human catalogue, none of the curious articles thereof attracted more general attention, as they passed to and fro in the streets of the little town, than the veteran warrior-seaman, Matthew Hardcastle. Indeed, Matthew was beheld, by "gentle and simple," in a different light to the eccentrics, poor things! before mentioned. The world, in spite of its conviction that it is wrong to laugh, laughs on at the antics and whims of the helpless beings it calls "insane;" and Gainsbro' followed the way of the world in laughing, too often, at poor Joe Hornby, and Nelly Fish, and Martin Jackson; but it was by no means a custom to laugh at Matthew Hardcastle.

Matthew was a tall, well-built old fellow, and did not lose an inch of his height, notwithstanding his very advanced age. His brave face resembled more the gnarled bark of an old oak than any other thing that ever existed; it was a real sea-faring face, was Matthew's, if ever a man wore one in this world. And then his wig! All the town talked of Matthew Hardcastle's wig. It did not fall below the shoulders, like the princely-looking old wigs of the days of Marlborough; but it was a very grand, burly wig, for all that. It reached below the ears of the fine old man, considerably; and it displayed five tiers of curls, — glorious curls they were! Matthew's grand three-cocked hat, too,—for he and old George Laughton, the currier, with his soul of independence, and Charley Careless, the little high-spirited silversmith, were the three last men in Gainsbro' who refused to put away the splendid head-covering of their forefathers for the paltry upper gear of modern times, — Matthew's three-cocked hat stood higher behind than it did before, and, conjoined with the grandeur of his wig, caused Matthew to look as bold and imposing as a brigadier major! And whoever met Matthew on the causeway, rocking as he went with a regular naval kind of motion, and supporting his aged steps by a bamboo in either hand, was sure to say, "Good morning to you, Matthew! I hope you are quite well this morning!" if they were considered to be his equals or superiors in rank; while all the little boys

and girls were wont to stop and bow or courtesy to him, and say, "Your sarvant, Matthew!" Such was the real honour paid to the aged sailor who had fought "the battles of his country," as they were called.

The time came, however, when all this show of respect to the brave old sailor ceased, for he lived too long! Twenty more years made his age hard upon one hundred. That was a rare age to live; but it would have been better for Matthew if he had died ten years earlier, for he lived till the effects of the "glorious" battles in which he had been engaged began to be felt—and felt grievously, even in that district, which you will deem comparatively happy when viewed after your mind's eye has been dwelling on the fathomless miseries of our dense hives of manufacture. He lived till hungry and ragged labourers began to stand daily in melancholy groups, and with folded arms, in the streets, and till the parish authorities began to talk of pulling down the old workhouse, to build a new "bastile" on the lovely green spot where the children used to resort to play at sand-mills!

Matthew felt the change in the "civilisation," as it was called, of the times, sensibly, as old as he was; but there was an inexhaustible spring of vivacity in the old seaman's noble nature, and in spite of age, infirmities, and bad times, Matthew Hardcastle was the merriest, as well as the oldest man in Gainsbro'. "Butter your shirt, sing tantara-bobus make shift!" Matthew would say, morning, noon, and night, when

the poor would be uttering their plaints in his ears; and the whimsical saying, together with the jolly old fellow's way of uttering it, many a time turned the mourning of his neighbours into mirth.

One day, a stranger heard this singular saying, as he was journeying through the town, and passing by the street end of the alley where Matthew was leaning on his two sticks to take the evening air, and chatting with his neighbours, according to his custom. The traveller could not fail to be struck with the saying, for he had heard it before; and he had seen the veteran who uttered it before, though it was many a long year since. The traveller stopped, and gazed on the old sailor for a moment or two, and then stretched out his aged hand—for he, too, was an old man—to grasp the hand of his ancient friend.

"Matthew Hardcastle! what, old Matthew!" he exclaimed.

Matthew stared, and seemed at a loss for a few seconds; but, at length, he let one stick fall, as it were mechanically, and, clasping his old friend's hand with the hearty gripe of a true sailor, cried aloud, while the fire of his youth seemed once more to gleam from his eyes,—

"What! Paul Perkins! God bless thy heart! Why, I thought—but God bless thy heart and soul, how art thou?—I thought thou hadst gone to Davy's locker ten or fifteen years ago!"

"And I little thought that ever these old eyes were

again to look upon Matthew Hardcastle," replied Paul; "why, Lord save us, you must be an amazing age! I am nearly threescore and ten, but you were a man in your prime when I was but little older than a child, you know."

"Butter your shirt, sing tantara-bobus make shift!" answered jolly old Matthew; "what matters it how old one may be? We shall live till we die —kill us that dare!" And the pair of sound-hearted old tars burst into a merry laugh that came up so clearly from the well-spring of their hearts as to create a kindred merriment through the curious crowd, which had by this time begun to gather round them, in the narrow street.

"Well, but come, shipmate, this must not be a dry meeting," said Paul; "suppose we step into the Red Lion, or the Black Horse, that I see on the signs here, hard by, and wet our whistles together, once more. It may be for the last time, you know, in this world."

"Avast, heaving!" replied Matthew; "I have no objection for Molly Crabtree, here, to fetch us a jack of rum or so, and we can have it in my little berth; but my old head won't bear the racket of a public-house now, Paul."

"Well, well, have it your own way, Mat," replied the other; and the two ancient men adjourned, as fast as their stiffened limbs would permit them, to Matthew's little dwelling in the alley.

Matthew's hammock — for he could never be persuaded to sleep in a bed — was slung at one corner of the narrow room, and just under it was placed his arm-chair. He would fain have given up his usual seat, on this occasion, to his friend; but Paul Perkins had too much real and untaught courtesy to accept of it.

"No, no, keep on board your own ship, Matthew," he cried; "I won't do any such thing: sit ye down, sit ye down."

And so Matthew sat down, with this entreaty, and reared his two sticks against the wall, and doffed his rare hat, and showed his wig in all its glory. Paul looked round the room, and could not help indulging in the natural exultation of a sailor. Nelson, and Howe, and Duncan, and Rodney, showed their gallant faces, according to the best skill of some humble limner, over the little mantelpiece: a fine model of a first-rate man-of-war — the work of Matthew's own fingers in his younger days — stood, in unapproachable pride, upon a little dresser on the opposite side of the dwelling; and, above it, a curious tobacco-pipe, from some foreign shore, curled its enormous length around three or four nails driven into the wall, and displayed the painted image of a black-a-moor's head, at its extremity. Other odd fragments of a sailor's fondness, such as small carved "figure-heads" of vessels, wrought with the pocket-knife, to relieve hours of tedium, pouches of kangaroo-skin, the

favourite repositories of the sailor's favourite weed, pipe-stoppers of bone, cut into grotesque shapes, and such-like nick-knackeries decorated the walls, till scarcely a bare patch of them could be seen.

"Well, and I suppose you're at home here, Mat, eh?" said Paul, his face beaming with pleasure as he asked the question.

A sudden and unwonted shade came over Matthew's countenance: "Hum!" said he, gloomily, "liked the old Dreadnought better; but she's now — God bless her! — only a hull, like me. But butter your shirt!" cried the gallant-hearted old fellow, bursting into his prevailing gaiety,—"sing tantara-bobus make shift! we shall live till we die — kill us that dare!" And again the old lads set up a merry laugh in unison, and were as happy, for the nonce, as the proudest monarchs in christendom.

Molly Crabtree now entered with the rum, and began to prepare the grog, that real nectar for the sailor. The precious glass was mixed, and went round over and over again; nor would the old sailors be said "nay" when Molly looked modest about it: she was compelled to take a sip each time when it came to her turn. Old shipmates were named, and the bravery and virtues of the dead were honoured; hearty and kind wishes for the welfare of the living were expressed; old stories were told, and the joys of old times were recorded with a sigh; but sighing usually was followed by a laugh amid the utterance of old

Matthew's singular expletive, "Butter your shirt! sing tantara-bobus make shift!"

"Upon my honour, Mat," at length said Paul, for, as it began to grow towards midnight, the phraseology of the ancient mariners began to grow more consequential, — more by token that the "jack" of rum had now been repeated, for the third time — "upon my honour, Mat, you and I were no skinkers in that hot action when you first wore the buttered shirt."

"Why, Lord ha' marcy on us!" cried Molly Crabtree, who had been listening all along, and staring like an owl at twilight, during the successive strange recitals of the two old seafarers, — "did Matthew ever wear a real buttered shirt, then? For Heaven's sake tell us the meaning on't!"

"That I will, ma'am," said Paul touching his hat as gallantly as an admiral; "you see, it was during a severe engagement with the Dutchmen that Mat and I were ordered to the main-top, — but hardly had we reached it, when a shot from the enemy cut our mainmast fairly in two, and hurled us both on to the enemy's deck, in the midst of more than a hundred heavy-bottomed Dutchmen! To dream of fighting against such odds, ma'am, you'll understand was, of course, out of all question; so we quietly walked our bodies, to the tune of 'donner and blitzen,' down below, to become close prisoners under hatches. Now it so happened, d'ye see, ma'am? that the only fellow-prisoners we found in the hole where

they crammed us were cheeses and queer big tubs; and we felt a nat'ral sort of a curiosity to rummage about the hole, when left in the dark by ourselves. Clambering up some o' these huge tubs at one end of the hole, we both lost footing together, and fell head over heels into the midst of something that was remarkably soft; and there we struggled, and struggled hard, too, — but 'twas all in vain, we could not flounder out, — and so were content to remain closed on all sides up to the neck, with just our heads bobbing out, and gasping for breath. Shiver my timbers, if ever I was so pickled before or since! At length the Dutchman was taken; and when some of our lads made their way into the dark hole where we were, we began to hail 'em. — "Dreadnought a-hoy!" said Mat: "The Union Jack a-hoy!" said I: "Who's there, in the devil's name?" cried one: "Why that's old Mat Hardcastle's growl — where the devil is he?" said first one of our lads and then another. And, as sure as you're there, ma'am," continued Paul, growing more polite and gallant as he proceeded, "what with one noise or another, it wasn't until the lads had driven their marling-spikes through almost every cask in the hole, that Mat and I were discovered up to the neck in one of the Dutchmen's big butter firkins. We were a good deal ashamed, ma'am, o' course, being as how we were soaked to the skin in the grease, for it warmed, as we stuck in it; and no doubt by its melting, we should

ha' been able to have got out of it without help, if we had had to stay much longer before we had been found. The worst of it was, we could not get time to strip for some hours after, and this made us both mighty uneasy, for many was the joke that was passed upon us as to how we liked our buttered shirts. But Mat's heart was always light, all his life long; and he answered all who asked that saucy question, just as he puts by all sorrow now, with "Butter *your* shirt! Sing tantarara-bobus make shift!—and ever since then Matthew has kept his saying; and it is not a bad one, either, let me tell you, ma'am! what think ye?" concluded Paul Perkins, and took a stiffer pull at the grog than he had ever done that night, thinking that he deserved it for his cleverness, and feeling himself entitled to a double pull because he had missed his turn by telling this yarn.

Molly Crabtree only answered with a hearty laugh, and Paul laughed too, but Matthew laughed louder and longer than either of them, for he was 'a practised laugher, and lived by it,' as he used jokingly to say. But now the fourth measure of grog was done, and it was too late to buy more; so the conversation began to grow less boisterous. Molly rose to depart; and the two veterans were left by themselves. Paul urged Matthew to get into his hammock, and Matthew urged Paul; but neither could prevail on the other, and so at last they fairly fell asleep in their

chairs, and neither of them awoke,—though they each snored as loud as a rhinoceros,—until Molly Crabtree came and opened the shutters some hours after sunrise the ensuing morning. Their limbs were tolerably stiff, and their heads ached beyond a joke, it may easily be guessed, for it was many a long day since either of them had gone to sleep groggy. They made the best of their aches and pains, however, when they awoke, and, after a hearty renewed gripe of friendship, thrust each a lumping quid of tobacco into his mouth, and then quietly awaited the preparation of breakfast by Molly Crabtree.

Now, as natural as our forefathers always reckoned it to be to get drunk, or, at least, tipsy, with an old friend, when you met him after a long absence or separation, yet it was always felt to be not less natural that the cosy companions of the preceding night talked like sober men the next morning. So it was with Matthew Hardcastle and Paul Perkins.

"Matthew, — I've been thinking," began Paul, very measuredly, as he was sipping the cocoa-sop out of a bright brown earthen porringer, with a spoon, in imitation of his host, — "I've been thinking, — we shall soon be in our last port."

"True, very true," said Matthew, "and, d'ye know, Paul? I would not much care if we had the same voyage to go again, save and except a little at the end on't."

"Then we don't think alike," said Paul, dropping

his spoon into the porringer, and looking thoughtful: "I'm sure, Mat, you'll bear me witness that I'm no skinkerly coward; but, splice me, if I don't think that all this warring and fighting, and blowing up of poor men's limbs is, after all, a great piece of wickedness. And, besides that, I've thought very much of late, — and particularly since I've seen the times change so much, — that this setting of poor Englishmen on to fight poor foreigners, and poor foreigners to fight poor Englishmen, is only a deep scheme, on the part of the rich abroad and the rich at home, to keep the poor down."

"Say you so, Paul?" exclaimed Matthew, also resting his spoon on the brim of the porringer, and looking very intently upon his friend; "why, you know, Paul, if we had not gone to fight the foreigners, they would have come to fight us."

"But who amongst 'em was it that wanted to fight? just think of that, Matthew," rejoined Paul, very earnestly. "You and I had no quarrel with the French, or the Dutch, or the Spaniard, you know. And what poor foreigners, think you, had any quarrel with the people here? No, no, depend on it, Matthew, the poor never made these wars, nor ever thought of fighting, or wished to fight, on either side: it was the rich — 'our betters,' as they are called — who began the quarrel, and then pushed us, or dragged us, into it, to lose our limbs, or shed our blood, or escape if we could."

"'Pon my word," said Matthew, shaking his wig, very significantly, "I've had some such thoughts as these now and then, — and you're making a strong yarn on't, Paul, I confess, —but what's the use of muddling one's old brains with such things? You know what I always say, Paul, — 'Butter your shirt —— "

"Nay, but avast a bit, Mat," said Paul, looking invincibly serious; "we are getting fast into our last port, as I said before; and, if we have been unthinking fools all our lives, I don't see why we should not open our eyes and look about us a bit, before we step on the last shore. Times are harder now than ever you and I knew 'em; and, as much fuss as there used to be made about an old seaman, all that sort of thing is gone. I question if you and I live a few years longer, and grow cranky, — and, God knows, I begin to feel queer, night and morning,—but folks will grow weary of waiting on us, and the parish wolves will haul us away to the workhouse, and pocket our little pensions."

"God Almighty forbid!" ejaculated Matthew, very fervently.

"But 'tis very likely to come to pass, however, let me tell you," rejoined Paul; "you knew Jerry Simpson: he was berthsman with us, if you remember, and lost an arm at Trafalgar. He wouldn't go into Greenwich college, but went and settled in Shoreditch, with his old sister. She died two

twelvemonths ago, and poor old Jerry soon grew helpless — so they took him into the parish poor-house, pocketing his pension, and he died there, of sheer grief, about six months ago. That was a rum reward for fighting for his country so bravely as Jerry did ——"

"By G—d it was!" exclaimed old Matthew, involuntarily — for the fine old fellow had not uttered an oath for years before: "the Lord ha' mercy upon me for swearing, poor old sinner that I am!" he continued: — "but you don't say that that's true about Jerry Simpson, do you, Paul? why he used to rush into a gun-boat like a ravenous wolf! Shiver my old timbers! but a braver sailor than Jerry never stepped upon deck!"

"'Pon the word of a sailor, what I have said is true," replied Paul, "for I saw it with my own sorrowful eyes. But now don't you perceive, Matthew," resumed Paul, eager to take advantage of the impression this fact had made, "that the change in the state of things is owing to the heavy taxes caused by the war, and ——"

"Why, you see, Paul, I don't understand these things," said Matthew, impatiently; "but I feel you are right about us poor dogs never wishing to bite the foreigners — for I never had such a thought till I got on board ship. But why is it that great folks wish to shed blood at such a rate? What do they want, and what would they have? 'Zounds!

if I have but my bit o' bacco, and can rest at night, I'm as happy as any of 'em. And then, again, Paul, why is it — excuse me, Paul, if I seem to talk foolish; I'm older than you, but you always had more book larning, I'm well aware — why is it that the poor don't let the rich fight their battles themselves, if they want any fighting?"

"Why, there, now, you old billy-goat!" exclaimed Paul, laughing; "you know that both you and I were dragged off by the press-gang, just as we were about to step on shore at Wapping; and were not thousands hauled away, in the same manner, throughout the war? 'Why is it that we don't let 'em fight their own battles themselves' indeed! why, you know, Mat, the poor dogs are compelled to obey the rich ones, in this world. What I want you to see is that the rich dogs make these wars on purpose to keep the poor dogs under. And yet I don't know, Matthew, that either you or I can alter things: it is past our time o' life; and, besides, I believe the whole consarn will before long tumble to pieces of itself, for the world's about tired of it."

"Blow me!" exclaimed Matthew, completely wearied of the subject, and anxious to resume his usual careless and happy vein, "if I can see the use of all your palaver, Paul: you may be right, in the main, but then you make no sail, take as many tacks as you will. You still end by saying the poor dogs are forced to bark and bite as the rich dogs bid 'em;

and you own that we're both too old to do aught towards bettering things; and, besides, you say the consarn's doomed to fall to pieces by its own rottenness; and so, instead of bothering my old brains about it, I still say, as I did when we got out of the Dutchmen's firkin, 'Butter your shirt! sing tantarara-bobus make shift!'"

The argument was ended with a hearty laugh on both sides, for, as toughly as Paul had spun his yarn, it was clear, from his last observation, that he was beginning to esteem his work as "labour in vain." That day and another passed in calling old times to mind; and, on the fourth day, the two ancient friends and fellows in many a storm and broil, parted, never to meet again on the lee-shore of Time.

Old Matthew Hardcastle kept up his gaiety of heart till his last day, though that day was, to the full, as doleful as his trusty friend Paul Perkins had prognosticated it would be. Reader, — if ever it falls in your way to visit old Gainsbro', you will learn that, in the main, what I am about to relate is too true. In proportion as Matthew became helpless, people were wearied with waiting upon him; and, disgraceful to relate! the old warrior-seaman was, at length, neglected till his aged body swarmed with filth. Instead of respect, disgust was now expressed for him, by an unreasonable world. Paul Perkins' prophecy came true to the letter: the parish

"worthies" came to "take care of him;" they took him to the poor-house; he was stripped stark-naked in the wash-house; and cold water was "swabbed," as he himself would have said, upon his aged body to cleanse him! Even in that moment, the brave companion of Howe and Nelson strove to keep up the gaiety of his noble heart, and once essayed his old saying, "Butter your shirt! sing" —— But his aged lips quivered, and his jaws chattered with the cold, — and his bold old heart broke with the barbarous treatment he was undergoing!

Oh! this is a world of wrong; and it will take a great deal of effort to right it, if ever it be righted at all. Reader! if you even think, with Paul Perkins, that the bad system under which so many groan, will, at length, fall to pieces by virtue, or rather by the vice, of its own imperfections, — is it not, still, sensible and philanthropic to be doing what little we can to hasten what we feel to be "a consummation devoutly to be wished?"

DOROTHY PYECROFT'S PREACHING;

OR,

"CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME."

ALL the world, in the village of Sturton-le-Steeple, had said so, before the time of old Dorothy Pyecroft; but Dorothy did not join all the world in saying so. Sturton is a homely little place, situate in the pleasant shire of Nottingham, and lying within a couple of miles of the Trent, and old Lincolnshire; and its church steeple forms a pretty object in the landscape which you view from the hills above Gainsboro'. Dorothy Pyecroft, from the time that she was a child but the height of a table, went to Gainsboro' market with butter, eggs, or poultry, as regularly as Tuesday returned in each week; for the hearty old dame used commonly to boast that she had never known what it was to have a day's illness in her life, although, at the season we are beginning to gossip about, she was full threescore and ten. It was a bonny sight to see

the dame go tripping o'er the charming lea which spreads its flowery riches from Sturton-le-Steeple to the banks of noble Trent, by four of the clock on a gay summer's morning, with the clean milking-pail under her arm, that was bare to the elbow. You would have thought, at a distance, she had been some blithe maiden in her teens. And then the cheerful and clear tone in which she summoned her cows, calling to them as kindly as if they were her children — "Come, my pratty creatures!" a call that was the signal for a treat of pleasing pastoral music to the enthusiastic early angler on the Trent: the rich, varied "low" of the cows, — alto, tenor, and bass, — answered that call, in changeful echo across the stream; the angler's delighted ear caught a treble, heavenward, from the matin lark, to complete the "harmony;" and even the cackling of the geese, uttering their confused joy at the sound of the dame's voice, seemed to mingle no unpleasing "discord" with the natural chorus. By the time that her morning's milking was over, the spoilt maidens of the village were only beginning to open their kitchen window-shutters; and she usually passed the whole train of them, loitering and chattering about their sweethearts, on their way to the lea, as she returned home, with the rich load upon her head, and her arms fixed as properly a-kimbo as could be shown by the sprightliest lass that ever carried a milking-pail. Some little shame was commonly felt among the

loiterers as they passed the exemplary old woman,— but it did not result in their reformation. Old Farmer Muxloe, who was always abroad at day-break, and usually chatted a few moments with the dame just at the point where the footpath crossed the bridle-way over the lea, often commented, in no very measured terms, on the decline of discipline among milk-maids since the days when he was a lad.

"Ah, dame!" he used to say, "there have been sore changes since you and I used to take a turn around the maypole; I'm sure the world gets lazier and lazier every day."

"Why, you see, neighbour, fashions change," the old dame would reply — for she ever loved to take the more charitable side of a question; "maybe, things may change again, and folk may take to getting up earlier, after a few more years are over."

"I'faith, I've little hope on't," the old farmer would reply, and shake his head, and smile; "but there's nobody like thee, Dolly, for taking the kindest side."

"Why, neighbour, I always think it the best," Dorothy would rejoin, with a benevolent smile; "I never saw things grow better by harsh words and harsh thinkings, in my time."

And then the old farmer would smile again, and say, "Well, well, that's just like thee! God bless thee, Dolly, and good morning to thee!" and away

he would turn Dobbin's head, and proceed on his usual morning's ride from field to field.

The work of her little dairy, added to the care of a humble household, composed of an infirm and helpless husband, and an equally infirm maiden sister, — with, all and sundry, a stout house-dog, two tabby-cats, and a fruitful poultry-yard, — usually occupied Dorothy Pyecroft through the bustling forenoon of each day; and when there was no immediate call upon her skill and benevolence among sick neighbours, — for she was the cleverest herb-woman in the village, and exercised her knowledge of the healing art without fee, or willing acceptance even of thanks, — she would sit in her polished high-backed chair, and work through the livelong afternoon at her spinning-wheel, drowsing her two infirm companions into a salutary rest and forgetfulness with the humming monotony of her labour, but revolving within her own mind many a useful and solemn thought, meanwhile.

Dorothy sat absorbed in this her favourite employ, one afternoon in autumn, when an itinerant pedlar made his customary call at the cottage-door. The dame's mind was so deeply involved in the contrivance of one of her little plans of benevolence, that she did not recognise the face of the traveller until he had addressed her twice.

"Any small wares for children? any needles, pins, or thimbles?" cried the pedlar, running through the

list of his articles with the glibness of frequent repetition.

"No, Jonah: I want none," replied the dame, kindly; "but, maybe, you'll take a horn o' beer, and a crumb or two o' bread and cheese?"

The pedlar assented, well pleased, and lowered the pack from his shoulders, and set down the basket from his hand, next seating himself in a chair without the ceremonial of asking, and in all the gladsome confidence of welcome.

"Thank you, thank you, dame," he said, and smacked his lips with pleasurable anticipation, as he took the horn of smiling beer and the piece of bread and cheese from the dame's hand.

"You're welcome, Jonah," replied the dame, heartily. "Have you walked far to-day? and what luck have you had?"

"I've come twenty miles, and have never taken handsel yet, dame," answered Jonah, in a melancholy tone.

"So, poor heart!" said Dorothy, very pitifully; "I must buy a trifling dozen of needles of thee, however, before thou goest. I fear times are hard, Jonah: I hear many and grievous complaints."

"Times are harder than ever I knew them to be, dame, I assure you," rejoined Jonah; "and they that have a little money seem most determined to hold it fast. Sore murmurings are made about this by poor folk: but I don't wonder at it, myself," con-

cluded the worldly pedlar, "for, in such sore times as these, there's no knowing what a body may come to want: and, as the old saying goes, you know, dame, 'Charity begins at home!'"—and Jonah buried his nose in the ale-horn, thinking he had said something so wisely conclusive that it could not be contradicted.

"They say it was a parson who first used that saying," observed Dorothy, glancing from her wheel, very keenly, towards the pedlar; "but, for my part, Jonah, I am very far from thinking it such a saying as a parson ought to use."

"Say you, dame?" said Jonah, opening his eyes very wide.

"Did charity begin at home with their master?" said Dorothy, by way of explanation.

"Ah, dame!" said the pedlar, quickly discerning Dorothy's meaning, "I fear but few parsons think of imitating their master now-a-days!"

"That's more than I like to say," observed the gentle Dorothy; "I think there are more good people in the world than some folk think for;—but I'm sure, Jonah, we all want a better understanding of our duty towards each other."

"Right, Dame Dorothy, right!—that's the best sort of religion; but there's the least of it in this world," rejoined the pedlar.

"Why, Jonah," continued the good dame, "I think there might easily be a great deal more good

in the world than there is. Every body ought to remember how many little kindnesses it is in their power to perform for others, without any hurt to themselves."

"Yes, a sight o'good might be done in that way, dame," observed the pedlar, beginning very much to admire Dorothy's remarks; "and how much more happy the world would be then!"

"Just so!" exclaimed Dorothy, her aged face beaming with benevolence; "that is the true way of making the world happy, for all to be trying to do their fellow-creatures some kindness. And then, you see, Jonah, when once the pleasure of thus acting began to be felt, there would soon be a pretty general willingness to make greater efforts, and even sacrifices of self-interest, as it is wrongly called, in order to experience greater pleasure, and likewise to increase the world's happiness."

"Truly, dame," said the pedlar, "you do me good to hear you talk. I'm but a poor scholar; yet I can tell, without book, that you must be right."

"But then, you see, Jonah," continued the dame, half unconscious of Jonah's last observation, "if every body were to say, 'Charity begins at home,' this general happiness would never begin. I like best, Jonah, to think of the example of the Blessed Being who came into the world to do us all good. He went about pitying the miserable and afflicted,

and healing and blessing them. Charity did not begin at home with him, Jonah!"

The tears were now hastening down Jonah's rough cheeks. How forcible are lessons of goodness! how irresistibly the heart owns their power! Jonah could not support the conversation further. Dorothy's plain and unaffected remarks sunk deep in to his bosom; and when he rose up, and buckled on his pack once more, and the aged dame gave him "handsel," or first money for the day, by purchasing a few pins and needles, the poor pedlar bade her farewell in an accent that showed he felt more than common thankfulness for her kindness.

Alas! this is a world where good impressions are, too often, speedily effaced by bad ones. Jonah called, next at the gate of a wealthy squire, and, with hat in hand, asked for leave to go up to the kitchen-door and expose his wares to the servants. The squire refused; and when Jonah pleaded his poverty, and ventured to remonstrate, the squire frowningly threatened to set the dogs upon him, if he did not instantly decamp! Jonah turned away, and bitterly cursed the unfeeling heart of the rich man, — avowing, internally, that Dorothy Pyecroft was only a doating old fool, — for, after all, "Charity begun at home!"

Scarcely had the pedlar taken twenty steps from Dame Dorothy's cottage, ere the village clergyman knocked at her door. The dame knew the young

parson's "rap-rap-rap!" It was quick and consequential, and unlike the way of knocking at a door used by any one else in Sturton, who thought it necessary to be so ceremonious as to give notice before they entered their neighbour's dwelling. Dame Dorothy ceased her spinning, and rose to open the door, curtesying with natural politeness, and inviting her visitor to be seated.

"Thank ye!" said the parson, raising his brows superciliously, putting the hook-end of his hunting-whip to his mouth, and striding about the floor in his spurred boots; "sit you down, I beg, Dame Pyecroft! sit you down — I'll not sit, thank ye!"

"I fear, sir, there is a great deal of suffering at present," said Dorothy, sitting down, and fixing her mild blue eyes upon the thoughtless young coxcomb, and feeling too earnestly in love with goodness to lose any opportunity of recommending its glorious lessons.

"Oh! — suffering! — ay!" observed the young clergyman, in a tone that showed he did not know what it was to think seriously: "you know there always was a difference between the rich and the poor."

"But do you not think, sir, that the rich might lessen the difference between themselves and the poor, without injuring themselves?" asked Dorothy, in a tone of mild but firm expostulation.

"Why, as to that, I can't say exactly," replied

the parson, apparently brought to a halt in his thoughtlessness, and unable to extricate himself from the difficulty in which his ignorance placed him; "I can't say exactly; but, you know, Dame Pyecroft, some people have nothing to give away, though they may be better off than many of the poor: with such people, you know, Dame Pyecroft, the old proverb holds good, that 'Charity begins at home.'"

"I am grieved to hear *you* quote that proverb, sir," said Dorothy; "I had just been exerting my poor wits to show that that saying was not a right one, in the hearing of poor Jonah the pedlar, before your reverence came in."

"Not a right saying, Dame Pyecroft? Why, you know it is a very old-established saying; and I think it a very shrewd one," rejoined the clergyman.

"But it is not so old as the New Testament, sir," replied Dorothy, with a winning smile; "and as shrewd as it is, do you think, sir, it was ever acted upon by your Great Master?"

The young clergyman took his hook-whip from his mouth, laid it on the table, took out his pocket-handkerchief, and, blushing up to the eyes, sat down before he attempted an answer to the good old dame's meek but powerful question.

"You will remember, Dame Dorothy," he said, at length, "that the Saviour was in very different circumstances to all other human beings that ever lived."

"But you will remember, sir," rejoined Dorothy, in the same mildly pertinacious manner, "that that Blessed Being said to his disciples, 'I have given you an example, that ye shall do as I have done to you: if I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.'"

"Yes: that is very beautiful," said the young clergyman, feeling the irresistible force of goodness, and speaking as if he had never read the passage in the book for himself: "the Saviour's example is very beautiful."

"And does not your reverence perceive how easy and delightful it would be for every one to begin to follow it?" immediately rejoined Dorothy, taking advantage of the good impression which, she saw, was being made on the mind of the young parson; "how easily might all who have enough give even of their little superfluity; how easily might we all do each other kindnesses which would cost us nothing! What solid pleasure this would bring back upon each of our hearts; and how surely it would lead us to make sacrifices, in order to experience the richer pleasure of doing greater good! Oh, sir," concluded the good old creature, with a tear that an angel might envy gliding down her aged and benevolent cheek, "I cannot think that any one knows the secret of true happiness who practises the precept — 'Charity begins at home!'"

The young and inexperienced man gazed with a

strange expression at his new and humble teacher. This was better preaching than he had ever heard or practised. His heart had been misled, but not thoroughly vitiated, by a selfish and falsely styled "respectable" education. He was too much affected to prolong the conversation then; but he became, from that time, a pupil at the feet of the aged Dorothy. His fine manners were laid aside. He became a real pastor. He was, from that day, more frequently in the cottages of the poor, twenty times over, than in the houses of the rich. He distributed of his substance to relieve the wants of others, and lived himself upon little. He forgot creeds to preach goodness, and pity, and mercy, and love. He preached till he wept, and his audiences wept with him. His life was an embodiment of the virtues he inculcated. And when, in the course of five short years, he laid down his body in the grave, a victim to the earnest conviction of his mind, the poor crowded around his hallowed resting-place with streaming eyes, and loving, but afflicted hearts, wishing they might be where he was when they died, since they were sure his presence, they said, of itself would make a heaven!

The young clergyman interred Dorothy Pyecroft but half a year before his own departure; and her last words were words of thankfulness that ever she had shown the young man the fallacy of the proverb — "Charity begins at home."

THE

MINISTER OF MERCY.

LEICESTER has the appearance of a new town as you glance at it, in your rapid course on the Midland Counties Railway. And, if the "locomotives" halt for a few minutes at a point on the line where you have a full view of the goodly borough, the momentary impression which numerous ancient church-towers gives you of the real antiquity of the place is soon effaced by the extensive rows of newly-built houses that stretch away on every side till they appear to cover almost the entire populous area on which you are gazing. Successive gusts of prosperity for the manufacturers, occurring at various periods during the last forty years,—too often followed by severe depressions,—have in fact swelled the town to more than double its size at the close of the last century.

Yet a few days' sojourn in the borough would afford a lover of antiquity no inferior treat. The massive wall and arched vaults of a ruin, believed to

have formed part of a temple of Janus during the ages that Britain was under Roman sway, — the ivied remains of the noble abbey where the imperious and vice-regal Wolsey "laid his bones,"— the sternly frowning "Newarke," or entrance-tower to the castle of the Grantmesnels, Bellomonts, Blanchmaines, De Montforts, Plantagenets, and other proud Earls of Leicester, — the solitary wooded mound on which the castle itself anciently stood, — the rich minute carving of the old churches, — the quaint interior of the old town-hall, — the grotesque exterior of much of the really ancient part of the town, composed of dwellings striped with timber and plaster, and decked with ornamented or overhanging gables, — dwellings wherein the soldiers of the fated kingly Crookt-back were billeted on the night before Bosworth-field, — these, and sundry other features of historic chronicle and change, could not fail to awaken eager interest in an antiquarian. Our story, however, concerns itself less with the outward than the inward, and regards rather the misery of the living than the pride of the dead.

Passing along the ancient line of highway from York to London, from the churchless burial-yard of St. Leonard, over the old North bridge, revealing the meandering Soar and the meadows of the old monks; by the curious Gothic west-door of the very ancient church of All Saints, that almost compels you to stop and look at it; and then, by the trans-

verse streets, where the venerable "high cross" was taken down but a few years ago, and reaching that part of the ancient principal line of street called "Southgate," where modern Goths so lately took down that most interesting historical relic, the house in which the last regal Plantagenet slept the night before his death; (a splendid gable filled with a world of old English associations, and breathing a wholesome lesson to despotism from every atom of its mouldering substance!) the traveller would come to a ruinous-looking entry of a street on his right, bearing the chivalrous designation of "Red Cross Street." At the door of a low, crumbling house about halfway down this ancient bye-street, a dissenting minister stopped one winter's evening some eight-and-twenty years ago, to make his usual call of duty and benevolence. His gentle knock, however, was not answered; and, before he could repeat it, he was saluted hastily by a rich manufacturer, a member of his congregation, who was passing by on some business errand.

"You are the very man I wanted to see," said the minister in a very earnest tone, seizing the manufacturer by one arm, as if he feared the man of business might feel disposed to escape him: "I want half an hour's conversation with you, sir."

"But I cannot stay now, sir," replied the manufacturer; "will you join me in my morning ride in the gig to-morrow? Do, sir; it will do you good."

"I will, I will; thank you, sir," answered the minister, in a quick, nervous way that seemed to be usual with him; and they shook hands with great apparent fervour, and bid each other "good night."

The dissenting minister did not find entrance into the low, ruined-looking house, until a neighbour or two had forced open the door. A light was then brought, and a picture of affecting interest was revealed. A venerable silver-haired man lay breathing his last; and by the side of his humble bed, with folded hands, knelt she who had been the partaker of his joys and sorrows for sixty years, lost to all consciousness except that of mental prayer for her departing husband. The sound of the minister's voice seemed to arouse her for a moment; but she relapsed again into complete obliviousness of all things, save the one absorbing feeling created by the view of that gasping pallid form that lay before her. So the minister knelt, likewise; and when the neighbours who had entered with him had followed his example he prayed audibly and earnestly, yet so reverently and pathetically, that, while he prayed and wept, the neighbours thought themselves in the presence of some superior being, with a soul of compass to embrace and bless the whole human race, rather than a mere mortal. The face of the dying man kindled, too, with wondrous feeling, when he heard the sounds of that well-known and beloved voice, though he had seemed past consciousness but a few moments

before. And when the minister paused in his petition, and saw the aged man's look fixed upon him, he said, with unutterable sweetness and tenderness,—

"William, my dear old friend, is all well within? — is your hope still blooming and full of immortality?"

The aged man raised his withered right hand with a last effort — waved it thrice — smiled with an ineffable smile, — and expired!

The minister was raising the aged and speechless widow from her kneeling posture, and placing her in an arm-chair, when her married daughter and several other neighbours entered the house of death. The minister recognised the daughter, and, after committing the widow earnestly to her care, emptied his waistcoat pocket of the silver it contained, and gave it, without counting, into the hands of the astonished young woman, who stood staring, while the good man snatched up his hat, and, saying "God bless you all! I'll call again to-morrow: God bless you all!" hurried away in a moment. ——

A tall, grave-looking man, in the habit of a gentleman, bowed courteously to the dissenting minister, as he was turning the corner of the High Street, and, addressing him by his name, uttered the customary observations on the severity of the weather.

"Ah, my dear sir," spake the dissenting minister, unable, from the state of his feelings, to answer in

the same strain, "I wish I had had you with me a quarter of an hour ago."

"Why, sir?" asked the gentleman.

"That you might have seen, for yourself, how a Christian can die," answered the minister.

"Ah!" replied the gentleman, with a look of serious concern, "there you, and all truly Christian ministers, find a field of more exalted enterprise than the whole world of turmoil and strife, put together, can furnish. I envy you, my dear sir — I envy you, more than I can express to you."

"It is, indeed, a field of exalted, of truly glorious enterprise, the visiting of death-beds — the pouring of heavenly consolation into the spirit that is leaving its frail clay tabernacle, and the gladdening of the human wretchedness which is left to mourn and weep," burst forth the good minister, forgetting that he stood in the bleak, cold, open street, and not in his pulpit; "but, oh, my good friend, what a dark, disconsolate scene would your Free-thinking make of the chamber of death, were it as universally spread as you wish it to be!"

"It is there where you always have the advantage of me, sir," rejoined the gentleman; "I have acknowledged it, again and again; and I feel the force of that reflection so powerfully, sometimes, that I half resolve to spend the remainder of my life in some scheme of philanthropy, and, meanwhile, join in persuading men to believe Christianity, although

I do not believe its historical evidences are worth a straw——"

"But that would be wrong, sir!" said the minister interrupting the other, very earnestly.

"So I think, sir," continued the gentleman; "and yet I feel sometimes as if I should become guilty of a crime by striving to take away what I regard as a pleasant deceit from men,—their chance, by imbibing a full confidence in Christianity, of expiring not merely with calmness, but with rapturous joy and triumph. Free-thinking will never enable even the largest intellect, the most highly cultivated man, to die thus; much less will it give such a death to an imperfectly educated or ignorant man. But then, I reflect again, that it would be morally and veritably criminal in me to join in strengthening what I sincerely believe to be falsehood."

"And so it would, sir," said the dissenting minister, taking the gentleman's arm, who offered it, that they might walk on to avoid some degree of the cold; "so it would, sir: it would render you a very contemptible creature. Let me tell you, sir, that with all the delight I experience in fulfilling some little of my duty as a Christian minister, the remembrance of it would not move me one inch towards the bed of a dying man with the view of offering him the consolations of revealed religion—if I believed such consolations to be a mere farce. I would scorn to mock him with false hopes. You know how deeply

I regret your scepticism, my dear sir; but I would not see you veil it through a spurious tenderness. No, sir: truth and sincerity are the purest jewels in human character; even pity and benevolence, themselves, are gems of inferior water."

"I wish all Christians were like yourself," said the gentleman, after a pause of admiration for the great and good being with whom he felt it a real privilege to walk; "but I see so little practice of goodness from the hundreds around me who profess a religion that enthrones it, that the sight tends much to confirm me in my old opinions."

"Indeed, sir," observed the minister, in a very grave tone, "I must tell you that you will be guilty of great self-deceit, if you imagine that the wickedness of hypocrites, or the slackness of lukewarm professors, will form a valid excuse for your rejection of Christ's mission, should you, one day, prove it true."

"I know it, my dear sir," replied the gentleman; "I know it well; though I thank you for your kind and well-meant zeal in reminding me of it. I will tell you one thought of mine, however, — and it is one that fixes itself very forcibly before my judgment, — if callousness to the sufferings of their workmen continues to increase among the manufacturers as rapidly as it has increased for the last ten years, Christianity will be openly scoffed at by the poor of the next generation, in the very streets where we are now walking."

"You have only expressed what I expressed last Sunday morning from my own pulpit, sir," returned the minister, — seeming too deeply affected with his strong belief of the probability of such an event to be able to add more.

"I hear that the wretched framework-knitters suffer more and more from abatements of wages and other encroachments upon their means of subsistence, of the most unfeeling and unprincipled character," resumed the gentleman; "and although hundreds are without work at the present time, and the complaints of suffering from want of food, fuel, and clothing, are so loud and frequent, yet not a single rich manufacturer of the many that profess religion, in Leicester, proposes to open a public subscription for the poor, according to the humane custom of past times. I heard a whisper that you had begun to stir up the languid charity of some of your friends towards the commencement of a subscription: was I rightly informed, sir?"

"It is the very subject I intend to broach to Mr. ———, to-morrow morning," replied the minister, with an enthusiastic glow suffusing his expressive face.

"Please place your own name for that sum somewhere on the list," said the gentleman, taking a note for 20*l.* out of his pocket-book and giving it to the minister.

The good preacher was trying to stifle his grate-

ful tears, in order to thank the sceptic,—but the latter bowed and strode away; and the good preacher, as he walked towards his own house in deep reflective silence, had many thoughts of the true interpretation of such words as "infidel" and "Christian" that would have startled his audience, if he had uttered them before it on the following Sunday.

In spite of an agonised bodily system, the minister was early abroad the next morning, and his glorious brow beamed with pleasure, when the maid-servant announced that the rich manufacturer's gig was at the door, and the conversation was near that he hoped would result in the effective commencement of a subscription to relieve the misery, and hunger, and cold, and disease, under which the depressed stockingers and their families were groaning that severe winter. Yet the philanthropist, with all his guilelessness, knew the man he had to deal with, and proceeded in a somewhat circumlocutory way to his object. In the end, he enforced the claims of man as a brother, the admirableness and divinity of charity, and the indefeasible rights of the working man as a substantial agent in the creation of wealth, with so much of the potentiality of his transcendent eloquence, that the manufacturer, in spite of the resistance his heart's avarice made to the godlike theme, assented to the proposal that he should begin the public subscription. But how heart-stricken with grief and shame did the golden-tongued pleader feel when, on producing the

little book he had prepared for collecting the names of subscribers, the rich manufacturer hesitated as soon as he had written his name, bit the end of his cedar pencil, and then hastily put five pounds at the end of his name! The minister did not thank him, for his soul was too noble to permit his tongue to utter one word which his heart would not accompany: but he had, again, some peculiar thoughts about the true interpretation of the words "infidel" and "Christian."

Neither was the good man to be damped by such an inauspicious beginning; but begging Mr. —— would not drive on again till he, the minister, had got safely out of the gig, bid the rich churl "good morning," posted away to the house of another "of whom the world was not worthy," but with whom Leicester was likewise blessed at that time: the Rev. Mr. Robinson, vicar of St. Mary's, stayed till that good man formed a little collecting book, and then left him to divide the work of canvassing the town for names to form the subscription list. Assisted occasionally by others, the dissenting minister persevered, till, in the lapse of several days, and at the cost to himself of excruciating visitations of increased pain in the night season, he completed such a list as gave effectual relief to the hundreds of his suffering fellow-creatures then inhabiting Leicester.

That labour was no sooner ended than he commenced a close inquiry into the real state of the

staple trade of the town; and, finding that the reports of oppression and extortion, the foul fruits of avaricious competition, were not exaggerated, he sat down and wrote an appeal in behalf of the suffering framework-knitters that might have jeopardied the favour and acceptance of a less able preacher with the wealthier members of his congregation.

It might be imprudent to go on: the starving stockingers of Leicester have no longer such an advocate; and, as highly as some profess to esteem the memory of the truly good, they may feel angered by this introduction of a portrait which, as imperfectly as it is delineated, they will already have recognised to their shame. If a stranger to old Leicester should ask whose is the portrait this faint limning is intended to call to memory, it is hoped it will not be deemed an act of desecration to introduce, in a volume of merely fugitive essays, a name too truly holy to be lightly mentioned, — a name inscribed, ineffaceably, in English literature, by the sunbeam of his peerless and hallowed eloquence to whom it belonged, — the name of ROBERT HALL.

"MERRIE ENGLAND"—NO MORE!

THE present generation, — the generation succeeding that in which the eloquent philanthropist and the sceptical gentleman lived and conversed, — has it witnessed any verification of the serious prophecy uttered in that winter evening's conversation in the streets of Leicester? The following brief but truthful sketch will furnish an answer.

On an April morning in forty-two — scarcely four years bygone, — a group of five or six destitute-looking men were standing on a well-known space in Leicester, where the frustrum of a Roman milestone (surmounted, in true Gothic style, with a fantastic cross) was preserved within an iron palisade, and where the long narrow avenue of Barkby Lane, enters the wide trading street called Belgrave Gate. The paleness and dejection of the men's faces, as well as the ragged condition of their clothing, would have told how fearfully they were struggling with poverty and want, if their words had not been overheard.

"Never mind the lad, John," said the tallest and somewhat the hardest-featured man of the party; "he can't be worse off than he would have been at home, let him be where he will. What's the use of grieving about him? He was tired of pining at home, no doubt, and has gone to try if he can't mend his luck. You'll hear of him again, soon, from some quarter or other."

"But I can't satisfy myself about him, in that way, George," replied the man to whom this rough exhortation was addressed; "if the foolish lad be drawn into company that tempts him to steal, I may have to hear him sentenced to transportation, and that would be no joke, George."

"I see nothing so very serious, even in that," observed another of the group; "I would as lief be transported to-morrow as stay here to starve, as I've done for the last six months."

"It would seem serious to me, though," rejoined John, "to see my own child transported."

"Why, John, to men that scorn to steal, in spite of starvation," resumed George, "it's painful to see any child, or man either, transported: but where's the real disgrace of it? The man that pronounces the sentence is, in nine cases out of ten, a bigger villain than him that's called 'the criminal.' Disgrace is only a name — a mere name, you know, John."

"I'm aware there's a good deal o' truth in that,"

replied John; "the names of things would be altered a good deal, if the world was set right: but, as wrong as things are now, yet I hope my lad will never steal, and have to be sentenced to transportation. I've often had to hear him cry for bread, since he was born, and had none to give him; but I would sooner see him perish with hunger than live to hear him transported, for I think it would break my heart; — and God Almighty forbid I ever should have to hear it!"

"Goddle Mitey!" said George, pronouncing the syllables in a mocking manner, and setting up a bitter laugh, which was joined by every member of the group, except the mournful man who had just spoken; "who told thee there was one? Thy grandmother and the parsons? Don't talk such nonsense any more, John! it's time we all gave it over: they've managed to grind men to the dust with their priestcraft, and we shall never be righted till we throw it off!"

"No, no," chimed in another, immediately; "they may cant and prate about it: but, if their God existed, he would never permit us to suffer as we do!"

"Well, I'm come seriously to the same conclusion," said one who had not spoken before, and was the palest and thinnest of the group: "I think all their talk about a Providence that disposes the lot of men differently here, 'for His Own great mysterious purposes,' as they phrase it, is mere mys-

terious humbug, to keep us quiet. What purpose could a being have, who, they say, is as infinitely good as he is infinitely powerful, in placing me where I must undergo insult and starvation, while He places that man, — the oppressor and grinder, who is riding past now, in his gig, — in plenty and abundance?"

"Right, Benjamin," said George; "they can't get quit of their difficulty, quibble as they may: if they bedaub us with such nicknames as 'Atheistical Socialists,' we can defy them to make the riddle plainer by their own Jonathan Edwards, that they say good Robert Hall read over thirteen times, and pronounced 'irrefragable.'"

"Just so," resumed Benjamin, "whether man be called a 'Creature of Circumstance,' or a 'Creature of Necessity,' it amounts to the same thing. And, then, none of the Arminian sects can make out a case: they only prove the same thing as the Calvinist and the Socialist, when their blundering argument is sifted to the bottom."

"So that, if there be a Providence," continued George, "it has appointed, or permitted, — which they like, for it comes to the same, — that old —— should fling the three dozen hose in your face last November, and that you should be out of work, and pine ever since; it appointed that I should get a few potatoes or a herring, by begging, or go without food altogether, some days since Christmas;

and that each of us here, though we are willing to work, should have to starve; while it appointed that the mayor should live in a fine house, and swell his riches, by charging *whole* frame-rents, month after month, to scores of poor starving stockingers that had from him but half week's work."

"And, with all their talk about piety," rejoined Benjamin, "I think there is no piety at all in believing in the existence of such a Providence: and since, it appears, it can't be proved that Providence is of any other character, if there be One at all, I think it less impious to believe in None."

John stood by while this conversation was going on; but he heard little of it,—for his heart was too heavy with concern for his child,—and, in a little time, he took his way, silently and slowly, towards other groups of unemployed and equally destitute men, who were standing on the wider space of ground, at the junction of several streets,—a locality known by the names of "the Coal-hill," and "the Hay-market," from the nature of the merchandise sold there, at different periods, in the open air.

"Have you found the lad yet?" said one of John's acquaintances, when he reached the outermost group.

"No, William," replied the downcast father; "and I begin to have some very troublesome fears about him, I'll assure you."

"But why should you, John?" expostulated the other; "he's only gone to try if he can't mend him-

self —— Look you, John!" he said, pointing excitedly at what he suddenly saw; "there he goes, with the recruiting serjeant!"

The father ran towards the soldier and his child; and every group on the Coal-hill was speedily in motion when they saw and heard the father endeavouring to drag off the lad from the soldier, who seized the arm of his prize, and endeavoured to detain him. An increasing crowd soon hemmed in the party,—a great tumult arose,—and three policemen were speedily on the spot.

"Stick to your resolution, my boy!" cried the soldier, grasping the lad's arm with all his might; "you'll never want bread nor clothes in the army."

"But he'll be a sold slave, and must be shot at, like a dog!" cried the father, striving to rescue his child,—a pale, tall stripling, who seemed to be but sixteen or seventeen years of age.

"Man-butcher!—Blood-hound!" shouted several voices in the crowd: whereat the policemen raised their staves, and called aloud to the crowd to "stand back!"

"I demand, in the Queen's name, that you make this fellow loose his hold of my recruit!" said the soldier, in a loud, angry tone, to the policemen; two of whom seemed to be about obeying him, when a dark, stern-browed man among the crowd, of much more strong and sinewy appearance than the majority of the working multitude who composed it, stepped forward, and said,—

"Let any policemen touch him that dare! If they do they shall repent it! There's no law to prevent a father from taking hold of his own child's arm to hinder him from playing the fool!"

The men in blue slunk back at these words; and the soldier himself seemed intimidated at perceiving the father's cause taken up by an individual of such determination.

"Tom," said the determined man to the lad, "have you taken the soldier's money?"

"Not yet," answered the lad, after a few moments' hesitation.

"Then he shall have my life before he has thee!" said the father, whose heart leaped at the answer, and infused so much strength into his arm, that with another pull he brought off his lad, entirely, from the soldier's hold. The crowd now burst into a shout of triumph; and when the soldier would have followed, to recapture his victim, the stern-browed man confronted him with a look of silent defiance; and the red-coat, after uttering a volley of oaths, walked off amidst the derision of the multitude.

"Don't you think you were a fool, Tom, to be juggled with that cut-throat?" said the stern-browed man to the lad, while the crowd gathered around him and his father.

"I wasn't so soon juggled," replied the lad; "he's been at me this three months; but I never yielded till this morning, when I felt almost pined to death,

and he made me have some breakfast with him, — but he'll not get hold of me again!"

"That's right, my lad!" said one of the crowd; "the bloody rascals have not had two Leicester recruits these two years; and I hope they'll never have another."

"No, no, our eyes are getting opened," said another working-man; "they may be able to kill us off by starvation, at home; but I hope young and old will have too much sense, in future, to give or sell their bodies to be shot at, for tyrants."

"Ay, ay, we should soon set the lordlings fast, if all working-men refused to go for soldiers," said another.

"So we should, Smith," said a sedate-looking elderly man; "that's more sensible than talking of fighting when we've no weapons, nor money to buy 'em, nor strength to use 'em."

"Then we shall wait a long while for the Charter, if we wait till we get it by leaving 'em no soldiers to keep us down," said a young, bold-looking man, with a fiery look; "for they'll always find plenty of Johnny Raws ready to list in the farming districts."

"And we shall wait a longer while still if we try to get it by fighting, under our present circumstances," answered the elderly man, in a firm tone; "that could only make things worse, as all such fool's tricks have ended, before."

"You're right, Randal, you're right!" cried seve-

ral voices in the crowd; and the advocate of the bug-bear "physical force" said not another word on the subject.

"No, no, lads!" continued the "moral force" man, "let us go on, telling 'em our minds, without whispering, — and let us throw off their cursed priest-craft, — and the system will come to an end, — and before long. But fighting tricks would be sure to fail; because they're the strongest, — and they know it."

"Yes, it must end, — and very soon," observed another working-man; "the shopkeepers won't be long before they join us; for they begin to squeak, most woefully."

"The shopkeepers, lad!" said the dark-looking man, who had confronted the soldier; "never let us look for their help: there is not a spark of independence in any of 'em: they have had it in their power, by their votes, to have ended misrule, before now, if they had had the will."

"Poor devils! they're all fast at their bankers', and dare no more vote against their tyrants than they dare attempt to fly," said another.

"There is no dependence on any of the middle class," said the dark-looking man; "they are as bad as the aristocrats. You see this last winter has passed over, entirely, without any subscription for the poor, again, — as severe a winter as it has been."

"Ay, and work scarcer and scarcer, every day," said another.

"They say there are eight hundred out o'work now, in Leicester," said the elderly, sedate man, who had spoken before; and I heard a manufacturer say there would be twice as many before the summer went over: but he added, that the people deserved to be pinched, since they would not join the Corn Law Repealers."

A burst of indignation, and some curses and imprecations, followed.

"Does he go to chapel?" asked one.

"Yes; and he's a member of the Charles Street meeting," said the elderly man.

"There's your religion, again!" — "There's your saintship!" — "There's your Christianity!" — "There's their Providence and their Goddle Mitey!" — were the varied indignant exclamations among the starved crowd, as soon as the answer was heard.

"I should think they invented the Bastile Mill, while they were at chapel!" said one.

"Is it smashed again?" asked another.

"No; but it soon will be," answered the man who confronted the soldier.

These, and similar observations, were uttered aloud, in the open street, at broad day, by hundreds of starved, oppressed, and insulted framework-knitters, who thus gave vent to their despair. Such

conversations were customary sounds in John's ears, and, having recovered his son, he took him by the arm, after this brief delay, and, walking slowly back towards the Roman milestone, the two bent their steps down the narrow street called Barkby Lane.

After threading an alley, they reached a small wretchedly furnished habitation; and the lad burst into tears, as his mother sprung from her laborious employ at the wash-tub, and threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him. Two or three neighbours came in, in another minute, and congratulating the father and mother, on their having found their son, a conversation followed on the hatefulness of becoming "a paid cut-throat for tyrants," the substance of which would have been as unpleasing to "the powers that be" as the conversation in the street, had they heard the two. The entry, into the squalid-looking house, of another neighbour, pale and dejected beyond description, gave a new turn to the homely discourse.

"Your son has come back, I see, John," said the new-comer, in a very faint voice: "I wish my husband would come home."

"Thy husband, Mary!" said John; "why, where's he gone? Bless me, woman, how ill you look!—What's the matter?"

The woman's infant had begun to cry while she spoke; and she had bared her breast, and given it to the child: but—Nature was exhausted! there was no

milk;—and, while the infant struggled and screamed, the woman fainted.

She recovered, under the kindly and sympathetic attention of the neighbours; and the scanty resources of the group were laid under contribution for restoring some degree of strength, by means of food, to the woman and her child. One furnished a cup of milk, another a few spoonfuls of oatmeal, another brought a little bread; and when the child was quieted, and the mother was able, she commenced her sad narrative. She had not, she said, tasted food of any kind for a day and two nights: she had pawned or sold every article of clothing, except what she had on, and she was without a bonnet entirely: nor had her husband any other clothes than the rags in which he had gone out, two hours before, with the intent to try the relieving officer, once more, for a loaf, or a trifle of money: to complete their misery, they owed six weeks' rent for the room in which lay the bag of shavings that formed their bed; and, if they could not pay the next week's rent, they must turn out into the street, or go into the Bastile.

Her recital was scarcely concluded, when the sorrowful husband returned. He had been driven away by the relieving officer, and threatened with the gaol, if he came again, unless it was to bring his wife and child with him to enter the Union Bastile!—and the man sat down, and wept.

And then the children of misery mingled their

consolations,—if reflections drawn from despair could be so called,—and endeavoured to fortify the heart of the yielding man, by reminding him that they would not have to starve long, for life, with all its miseries, would soon be over.

"I wonder why it ever begun!" exclaimed the man who had been yielding to tears, but now suddenly burst out into bitter language: "I think it 's a pity but that God had found something better to do than to make such poor miserable wretches as we are!"

"Lord! what queer thoughts thou hast, Jim!" said the woman who had previously fainted, and she burst into a half-convulsive laugh.

"Indeed, it 's altogether a mystery to me," said the man who had so recently found his son; "we seem to be born for nothing but trouble. And then the queerest thing is that we are to go to hell, at last, if we don't do every thing exactly square. My poor father always taught me to reverence religion; and I don't like to say any thing against it, but I 'm hard put to it, at times, Jim, I 'll assure ye. It sounds strange, that we are to be burnt for ever, after pining and starving here; for how can a man keep his temper, and be thankful, as they say we ought to be, when he would work and can 't get it, and, while he starves, sees oppressors ride in their gigs, and build their great warehouses?"

"It 's mere humbug, John, to keep us down:

that's what it is!" said Jim: "one of these piety-mongers left us a tract last week; and what should it contain but that old tale of Bishop Burnet, about the widow that somebody who peeped through the chinks of the window-shutters saw kneeling by a table with a crust of bread before her, and crying out in rapture, 'All this and Christ!' I tell thee what, John, if old Burnet had been brought down from his gold and fat living, and had tried it himself, I could better have believed him. It's a tale told like many others to make fools and slaves of us: that's what I think. Ay, and I told the long-faced fellow so that fetched the tract. He looked very sourly at me, and said the poor did not use to trouble themselves about politics in his father's time, and every body was more comfortable then than they are now. 'The more fools were they,' said I: 'if the poor had begun to think of their rights sooner, instead of listening to religious cant, we should not have been so badly off now:' and away he went, and never said another word.

"But I don't like to give way to bad thoughts about religion, after all, Jim," said John: "it's very mysterious—the present state of things: but we may find it all explained in the next life."

"Prythee, John," exclaimed the other, interrupting him, impatiently, "don't talk so weakly. That's the way they all wrap it up; and if a guess in the dark and a 'maybe' will do for an argument, why

any thing will do. Until somebody can prove to me that there *is* another life after this, I shall think it my duty to think about this only. Now just look at this, John! If there be another life after this, why the present is worth nothing: every moment here ought to be spent in caring for eternity; and every man who really believes in such a life would not care how he passed this, so that he could but be making a preparation for the next: is n't that true, John?"

"To be sure it is, Jim; and what o' that?"

"Why, then, tell me which of 'em believes in such a life. Do you see any of the canting tribe less eager than others to get better houses, finer chairs and tables, larger shops, and more trade? Is old Sour-Godliness in the north, there, more easily brought to give up a penny in the dozen to save a starving stockinger than the grinders that don't profess religion? I tell thee, John, it 's all fudge: they don't believe it themselves, or else they would imitate Christ before they tell us to be like him!"

Reader! the conversation shall not be prolonged, lest the object of this sketch should be mistaken. These conversations are *real:* they are no coinages. Go to Leicester, or any other of the suffering towns of depressed manufacture, where men compete with each other in machinery till human hands are of little use, and rival each other in wicked zeal to reduce man to the merest minimum of subsistence.

If the missionary people — and this is not said with a view to question the true greatness and utility of their efforts — if they would be consistent, let them send their heralds into the manufacturing districts, and first convert the "infidels" there, ere they send their expensive messengers to India. But let it be understood that the heralds must be furnished with brains, as well as tongues; for whoever enters Leicester, or any other of the populous starving hives of England, must expect to find the deepest subjects of theology, and government, and political economy, taken up with a subtlety that would often puzzle a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge. Whoever supposes the starving "manufacturing masses" know no more, and can use no better language, than the peasantry in the agricultural counties, will find himself egregiously mistaken. 'Tis ten to one but he will learn more of a profound subject in one hour's conversation of starving stockingers than he would do in ten lectures of a university professor. Let the missionary people try these quarters, then; but let their heralds "know their business" ere they go, or they will make as slow progress as Egede and the Moravians among the Greenlanders. One hint may be given. Let them begin with the manufacturers; and, if they succeed in making *real* converts to Christianity in that quarter, their success will be tolerably certain among the working-men, and tolerably easy in its achievement.

There is no "tale" to finish about John or his lad, or Jem and his wife. They went on starving,— begging,—receiving threats of imprisonment,—tried the "Bastile" for a few weeks,— came out and had a little work,—starved again; and they are still going the same miserable round, like thousands in "merrie England." What are your thoughts, reader?

SETH THOMPSON, THE STOCKINGER;

OR,

"WHEN THINGS ARE AT THE WORST, THEY BEGIN TO MEND."

LEICESTERSHIRE stockingers call that a false proverb. "People have said so all our lives," say they; "but, although we have each and all agreed, every day, that things were at the worst, they never begun to mend yet!" This was not their language sixty years ago, but it is their daily language *now;* and the story that follows is but, as it were, of yesterday.

Seth Thompson was the only child of a widow, by the time that he was six years old, and became a "winding boy," in a shop of half-starved framework-knitters at Hinckley, — a kindred lot with hundreds of children of the same age, in Leicestershire. Seth's mother was a tender mother to her child; but he met tenderness in no other quarter. He was weakly, and since that rendered him unable to get on with his winding of the yarn as fast as stronger children, he was abused and beaten by the journeymen, while the master stockinger, for every slight flaw in his work, —

though it always resulted from a failure of strength rather than carelessness, — unfeelingly took the opportunity to " dock " his paltry wages.

Since her child could seldom add more than a shilling or fifteen-pence to the three, or, at most, four shillings, she was able to earn herself, — and she had to pay a heavy weekly rent for their humble home, — it will readily be understood that neither widow Thompson nor Seth were acquainted with the meaning of the word " luxury," either in food or habits. A scanty allowance of oatmeal and water formed their breakfast, potatoes and salt their dinner, and a limited portion of bread, with a wretchedly diluted something called " tea" as an accompaniment, constituted their late afternoon, or evening meal; and they knew no variety for years, winter or summer. The widow's child went shoeless in the warm season, and the cast-off substitutes he wore in winter, together with lack of warmth in his poor mother's home, and repulses from the shop fire by the master and men while at work, subjected him, through nearly the whole of every winter, to chilblains and other diseases of the feet. Rags were his familiar acquaintances, and, boy-like, he felt none of the aching shame and sorrow experienced by his mother when she beheld his destitute covering, and reflected that her regrets would not enable her to amend his tattered condition.

Seth's mother died when he reached fifteen, and

expressed thankfulness, on her death-bed, that she was about to quit a world of misery, after being permitted to live till her child was in some measure able to struggle for himself. In spite of hard usage and starvation, Seth grew up a strong lad, compared with the puny youngsters that form the majority of the junior population in manufacturing districts. He was quick-witted, too, and had gathered a knowledge of letters and syllables, amidst the references to cheap newspapers and hourly conversation on politics by starving and naturally discontented stockingers. From a winding-boy, Seth was advanced to the frame, and, by the time he had reached seventeen, was not only able to earn as much as any other stockinger in Hinckley, when he could get work, but, with the usually improvident haste of the miserable and degraded, married a poor "seamer," who was two years younger than himself.

Seth Thompson at twenty-one, with a wife who was but nineteen, had become the parent of four children; and since he had never been able to bring home to his family more than seven shillings in one week, when the usual villainous deductions were made by master and manufacturer, in the shape of "frame-rent" and other "charges," — since he had often had but *half*-work, with the usual deduction of *whole* charges, and had been utterly without work for six several periods, of from five to nine weeks each, during the four years of his married life, — the fol-

lowing hasty sketch of the picture which this "home of an Englishman" presented one noon, when a stranger knocked at the door, and it was opened by Seth himself, will scarcely be thought overdrawn: —

Except a grey deal table, there was not a single article within the walls which could be called "furniture," by the least propriety of language. This stood at the farther side of the room, and held a few soiled books and papers, Seth's torn and embrowned hat, and the mother's tattered straw bonnet. The mother sat on a three-legged stool, beside an osier cradle, and was suckling her youngest child while she was eating potatoes and salt from an earthen dish upon her knee. Seth's dish of the same food stood on a seat formed of a board nailed roughly across the frame of a broken chair; while, in the centre of the floor, where the broken bricks had disappeared and left the earth bare, the three elder babes sat squatted round a board whereon boiled potatoes in their skins were piled, — a meal they were devouring greedily, squeezing the inside of the root into their mouths with their tiny hands, after the mode said to be practised in an Irish cabin. An empty iron pot stood near the low expiring fire, and three rude logs of wood lay near it, — the children's usual seats when they had partaken their meal. A description of the children's filthy and bedaubed appearance with the potatoe starch, and of the "looped and windowed" rags that formed their covering,

could only produce pain to the reader. Seth's clothing was not much superior to that of his offspring; but the clean cap and coloured cotton handkerchief of the mother, with her own really beautiful but delicate face and form, gave some relief to the melancholy picture.

Seth blushed, as he took up his dish of potatoes, and offered the stranger his fragment of a seat. And the stranger blushed, too, but refused the seat with a look of so much benevolence that Seth's heart glowed to behold it; and his wife set down her porringer, and hushed the children that the stranger might deliver his errand with the greater ease.

"Your name is Thompson, I understand," said the stranger; "pray, do you know what was your mother's maiden name?"

"Greenwood, — Martha Greenwood was my poor mother's maiden name, sir," replied Seth, with the tears starting to his eyes.

The stranger seemed to have some difficulty in restraining similar feelings; and gazed, sadly, round upon the room and its squalid appearance, for a few moments, in silence.

Seth looked hard at his visitor, and thought of one whom his mother had often talked of; but did not like to put an abrupt question, though he imagined the stranger's features strongly resembled his parent's.

"Are working people in Leicestershire usually so

uncomfortably situated as you appear to be?" asked the stranger, in a tone of deep commiseration which he appeared to be unable to control.

Seth Thompson and his wife looked uneasily at each other, and then fixed their gaze on the floor.

"Why, sir," replied Seth, blushing more deeply than before, "we married very betime, and our family, you see, has grown very fast; we hope things will mend a little with us when some o' the children are old enough to earn a little. We've only been badly off as yet, but you'd find a many not much better off, sir, I assure you, in Hinckley and elsewhere."

The stranger paused again, and the working of his features manifested strong inward feeling.

"I see nothing but potatoes," he resumed; "I hope your meal is unusually poor to-day, and that you and your family generally have a little meat at dinner."

"Meat, sir!" exclaimed Seth; "we have not known what it is to set a bit of meat before our children more than three times since the first was born; we usually had a little for our Sunday dinner when we were first married, but we can't afford it now!"

"Good God!" cried the stranger, with a look that demonstrated his agony of grief and indignation, "is this England, — the happy England, that I have heard the blacks in the West Indies talk of as a Paradise?"

"Are you my mother's brother? Is your name Elijah Greenwood?" asked Seth Thompson, unable longer to restrain the question.

"Yes," replied the visitor, and sat down upon Seth's rude seat, to recover his self-possession. —

That was a happy visit for poor Seth Thompson, and his wife and children. His mother had often talked of her only brother who went for a sailor when a boy, and was reported to be settled in some respectable situation in the West Indies, but concerning whom she never received any certain information. Elijah Greenwood had suddenly become rich, by the death of a childless old planter, whom he had faithfully served, and who had left him his entire estate. England was Elijah's first thought, when this circumstance took place; and, as soon as he could settle his new possession under some careful and trusty superintendence till his return, he had taken ship, and come to his native country and shire. By inquiry at the inn, he had learnt the afflictive fact of his sister's death, but had been guided to the poverty-stricken habitation of her son.

That was the last night that Seth Thompson and his children slept on their hard straw sacks on the floor, — the last day that they wore rags and tatters, and dined upon potatoes and salt. Seth's uncle placed him in a comfortable cottage, bought him suitable furniture, gave him a purse of 50*l.* for ready money, and promised him a half-yearly remittance

from Jamaica, for the remainder of his, the uncle's, life, with a certainty of a considerable sum at his death.

Seth and his wife could not listen, for a moment, to a proposal for leaving England, although they had experienced little but misery in it, their whole lives. The uncle, however, obtained from them a promise that they would not restrain any of their children from going out to Jamaica; and did not leave them till he had seen them fairly and comfortably settled, and beheld what he thought a prospect of comfort for them, in the future. Indeed, on the very morning succeeding that in which Seth's new fortune became known, the hitherto despised stockinger was sent for by the principal manufacturer of hosen, in Hinckley, and offered "a shop of frames," in the language of the working men; that is, he was invited to become a "master," or one who receives the "stuff" from the capitalist or manufacturer, and holds of him, likewise, a given number of frames, — varying from half-a-dozen to a score or thirty, or even more; and thus becomes a profit-sharing middleman between the manufacturer and the labouring framework-knitters. Seth accepted the offer, for it seemed most natural to him to continue in the line of manufacture to which he had been brought up; and his uncle, with pleasurable hopes for his prosperity, bade him farewell! —

"Well, my dear," said Seth to his wife, as they

sat down to a plentiful dinner, surrounded with their neatly-dressed and happy children, the day after the uncle's departure, "we used to say we should never prove the truth of the old proverb, but we have proved it at last: times came to the worst with us, and began to mend."

"Thank God! we have proved it, my love," replied the wife; "and I wish our poor neighbours could prove it as well."

Seth sighed, — and was silent. ——

Some years rolled over, and Seth Thompson had become a well-informed, and deep-thinking man, but one in whom was no longer to be found that passionate attachment to his native country which he once felt. The manufacturer under whom he exercised the office of "master," had borrowed the greater part of Seth's uncle's remittances, as regularly as they arrived; and as Seth received due interest for these loans, and confided that the manufacturer's wealth was real, he believed he was taking a prudent way of laying up enough for the maintenance of his old age, or for meeting the misfortunes of sickness, should they come. But the manufacturer broke; and away went all that Seth had placed in his hands. Every week failures became more frequent, — employ grew scantier, for trade was said to decrease, though machinery increased, — discontent lowered on every brow, — and the following sketch of what was said at a meeting of starving framework-knitters held in Seth Thomp-

son's shop but a month before he quitted England for ever, may serve to show what were his own reflections, and those of the suffering beings around him.

About twenty working men had assembled, and stood in three or four groups, — no "chairman" having been, as yet, chosen, since a greater number of attendants was expected.

"I wish thou would throw that ugly thing away, Timothy!" said a pale, intellectual looking workman, to one whose appearance was rendered filthy, in addition to his ragged destitution, by a dirty pipe stuck in his teeth, and so short that the head scarcely projected beyond his nose.

"I know it's ugly, Robert," replied the other, in a tone between self-accusation and despair, — "but it helps to pass away time. I've thrown it away twice, — but I couldn't help taking to it again last week, when I had nought to do. I think I should have hanged myself if I had not smoked a bit o' 'bacco."

"Well, I'm resolute that I'll neither smoke nor drink any more," said a third: "the tyrants can do what they like with us, as long as we feed their vices by paying taxes. If all men would be o' my mind there would soon be an end of their extravagance, — for they would have nothing to support it."

"Indeed, James," replied the smoker, "I don't feel so sure about your plan as you seem to be, yourself: you'll never persuade all working-men to give

up a sup of ale or a pipe, if they can get hold of either; but, not to talk of that, what's to hinder the great rascals from inventing other taxes if these fail?"

"They couldn't easily be hindered, unless we had all votes," said the first speaker, "we're all well aware of that; but it would put 'em about, and render the party more unpopular that wanted to put on a new tax."

"I don't think that's so certain, either," replied the smoker; "depend on't, neither Whigs nor Tories will run back from the support of taxes. D'ye ever read of either party agreeing to 'stop the supplies,' as they call it, or join in any measure to prevent taxes from being collected till grievances are redressed?"

"No, indeed, not we," chimed another, lighting his short pipe by the help of his neighbour's, and folding his arms, with a look of something like mock bravery; "and, for my part, I don't think they ever will be redressed till we redress 'em ourselves!"

"Ah, Joseph!" said the pale-looking man, shaking his head, "depend upon it that's all a dream! How are poor starvelings like us, who have neither the means of buying a musket, nor strength to march and use it, if he had it, — how are we to overthrow thousands of disciplined troops with all their endless resources of ammunition? — It's all a dream, Joseph! depend on't."

"Then what are we to do, — lie down and die?"

asked the other; but looked as if he were aware he had spoken foolishly, under the impulse of despair.

"I'm sure I often wish to die," said another, joining the conversation in a doleful tone; "I've buried my two youngest, and the oldest lad's going fast after his poor mother; one can't get bread enough to keep body and soul together!"

"Well, if it hadn't been for Seth Thompson's kindness," said another, "I believe I should have been dead by this time. I never felt so near putting an end to my life as I did last Sunday morning. I've been out o' work, now, nine weeks; and last Saturday I never put a crumb in my mouth, for I couldn't get it, and I caught up a raw potatoe in the street last Sunday morning, and ate it for sheer hunger. Seth Thompson saw me, and — God bless his heart! — he called me in and gave me a cup of warm coffee and some toast, and slipped a shilling into my hand." And the man turned aside to dash away his tears.

"Ay, depend upon it, we shall miss Seth, when he leaves us," said several voices together.

"It's many a year since there was a master in Hinckley like him," said the man with the short black pipe, "and, I fear, when he is gone, the whole grinding crew will be more barefaced than ever with their extortions and oppressions of poor men. Seth knew what it was to be nipped himself when he was

younger; that's the reason that he can feel for others that suffer."

"It isn't always the case, though," said another; "look at skin-flint Jimps, the glove-master; I remember him when he was as ragged as an ass's colt: and where is there such another grinding villain as Jimps, now he is so well off?"

"The more's the shame for a man that preaches and professes to be religious," said the smoker.

"It was but last Saturday forenoon," resumed the man who had mentioned Jimps, the glove-master, "that he docked us two-pence a dozen, again: and when I asked him if his conscience wouldn't reproach him when he went to chapel, he looked like a fiend, and said, 'Bob! I knew what it was to be ground once; but its my turn to grind now!'"

"And they call that religion, do they?" said the smoker, with an imprecation.

"It won't mend it to swear, my lad," said the intellectual-looking man; "we know one thing, — that whatever such a fellow as this may do that professes religion, he doesn't imitate the conduct of his Master."

"I believe religion's all a bag of moonshine," said the smoker, "or else they that profess it would not act as they do."

"Don't talk so rashly, Tim," rejoined the other; "we always repent when we speak in ill-temper. Religion can't cure hypocrites, man, though it can

turn drunkards and thieves into sober and honest men: it does not prove that religion is all a bag of moonshine, because some scoundrels make a handle of it. Truth's truth, in spite of all the scandal that falsehood and deceit brings upon it."

"Isn't it time we got to business?" said one of the group.

"I don't think it will be of any use to wait longer," said another; "there will not be more with us, if we wait another hour; the truth is, that men dare not attend a meeting like this, for fear of being turned off, and so being starved outright; — there's scarcely any spirit left in Hinckley."

"I propose that Seth Thompson takes the chair," said another, taking off his ragged hat, and speaking aloud.

A faint clapping of hands followed, and Seth took a seat upon a raised part of one of the frames at the end of the shop, and opened the meeting according to the simple but business-like form, which working-men are wont to observe in similar meetings, in the manufacturing districts.

"I feel it would scarcely become me to say much, my friends," he said, "since I am about to leave you. I thought, at one time, that nothing could have ever inclined me to leave old England; but it seems like folly to me, now, to harbour an attachment to a country where one sees nothing but misery, nor any chance of improvement. I would not

wish to damp your spirits; but if I were to tell you how much uneasiness I have endured for some years past, even while you have seen me apparently well off and comfortable, you would not wonder that I am resolved to quit this country, since I have the offer of ease and plenty, though in a foreign clime. I tell you, working men, that I had power over Mr. ——, by the moneys I had lent him, or I should have been turned out of this shop years ago. Week by week have we quarrelled, because I would not practise the tyrannies and extortions upon working men that he recommended and urged. It is but a hateful employ to a man of any feeling,—is that of a master-stockinger under an avaricious and inhuman hosier. But, if the master's situation be so far from being a happy one, I need not tell you that I know well, by experience, how much more miserable is that of the starved and degraded working-man. Indeed, indeed, —I see no hope for you, my friends,—yet, I repeat, I would not wish to damp your spirits. Perhaps things may mend yet; but I confess I see no likelihood of it, till the poor are represented as well as the rich."

It might produce weariness to go through all the topics that were touched upon by Seth and others. They were such as are familiarly handled, daily, in the manufacturing districts; ay, and with a degree of mental force and sound reasoning,—if not with polish of words,—that would make some gentlefolk

stare, if they were to hear the sounds proceeding from the haggard figures in rags who often utter them. The "deceit" of the Reform Bill, as it is usually termed by manufacturing "operatives;" the trickery of the Whigs; the corruption and tyranny of the Tories; the heartlessness of the manufacturers and "the League;" and the right of every sane Englishman of one and twenty years of age to a vote in the election of those who have to govern him, were each and all broadly, and unshrinkingly, and yet not intemperately, asserted.

One or two, in an under-tone, ventured to suggest that it might be advantageous to try, once more, to act with the Anti-Corn Law men, since many of the members of the League professed democracy; and, if that were done, working men would not fear to attend a meeting such as that they were then holding. But this was scouted by the majority; and a proposal was, at length, made, in a written form, and seconded, — "That a branch of an association of working men, similar to one that was stated to have been just established at Leicester, should be formed." The motion was put and carried, — a committee, and secretary, and treasurer, were chosen, — and the men seemed to put off their dejection, and grow energetic in their resolution to attempt their own deliverance from misery, in the only way that they conceived it could ever be substantially effected: but their purpose came to the ears of the manu-

facturers on the following day, threats of loss of work were issued, and no association was established!

Seth Thompson took his family to the West Indies, pursuant to the many and urgent requests contained in his uncle's letters, and soon entered upon the enjoyment of the plenty in store for him. Hinckley stockingers remain in their misery still; and, perhaps, there is scarcely a place in England where starving working men have so little hope, — although "things," they say, "have come to the worst," — that "they" will ever "begin to mend."

SAM SIMKINS, THE RUN-AWAY;

OR,

VILLAINY AS A REFUGE FROM THE TORTURES OF SOUR-GODLINESS.

SAM SIMKINS was a wild lad, — but whose fault was it that he became so? That was the significant question which uniformly followed the commemoration of his history among the old women of the village where he was born, and where, after the early death of his father and mother, he was apprenticed, by the parish, to Mr. Jonas Straitlace, the saddler and collar-maker. The village was not more than half-a-dozen miles from Birmingham; and to that town Sam usually trudged once or twice in the working part of the week on his master's business errands, and, invariably, accompanied his master thither twice on the Sunday, to attend the ministry of a Calvinistic teacher.

With the exception of a very restricted number of hours for sleep, these were the only portions of Sam's existence that could come within the name of relaxa-

tion. Some people gave Sam's master the title of a "money-grub;" but Mr. Jonas Straitlace himself modestly laid claim to the character of one who was "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, and ——" the reader knows the rest. In brief, he was one of the too numerous description of folk who cast their sour into the sweets of innocent enjoyment on every occasion within their compass, and strive to throw a universal pall over the world by keeping their fellow-creatures in mind that the next life alone is worth a moment's thought, — and yet, daily and hourly illustrate their own gloomy lesson by grasping at the dirt called money as eagerly as if they believed they could carry it with them over the ford of the grave, and that it would be still more current coin in the next life than in this. Strict rates of charge to his customers in an age of competition prevented Straitlace from extending his business; but the consequence was, that he grew more pinching towards himself, and still more towards his apprentice, in allowing the body its proper amount of sustenance, or the general constitution its necessary share of healthful unbending. Sam was pinched in his measure of food, and watched while he ate it, lest the spoon should travel so slowly to his mouth as to prevent his return to labour after the lapse of an appointed number of minutes; he was "alarumed" up at five in winter, and at four in summer, and kept at the bench till eight; and what went down more

hardly with Sam than either scant food and sleep, or unceasingly painful toil, was the fact, that his master's vinegared piety overflowed with such zeal for Sam's spiritual welfare as to compel him to spend the remaining time till ten, every working-day evening, in reading one book. Nay, the lad, in spite of the remembrance that every other apprentice in the village was allowed, at least, an hour's holyday-time, each day, would have felt it to be some amelioration of his captive lot, had he been allowed to derive such amusement from the book as it might afford; but Straitlace's zeal for Sam's happiness in the next life, taught him that he must use even this extreme resort to mortify the lad in the present state of existence, and, therefore, Sam must read nothing but the Prophets, in one division of the book, and the Epistles, in the other!

Such was the discipline to which Mr. Jonas Straitlace subjected Sam Simkins from the age of nine, when the parish placed the lad under his care, to fifteen. Straitlace had one invariable answer to all who remonstrated with him on the undue severity, the imprisoning strictness, he exercised towards his apprentice: — "Train up a child in the way he should go," he would say, quoting the whole text, "that's a Bible reason for what I do: it doesn't allow me to parley with flesh and blood: I must obey it."

Mr. Jonas Straitlace had found that fine moral

pearl in the great Oriental treasure-house of the wisdom-jewels of ages, and he was too sordidly ignorant to know that the originator of the maxim never intended the "should go" to be left to the judicature either of brain-sick zealots and morbid pietists, or of rash experimenters and fanciful speculatists. But what cared Straitlace about the legitimate and fair interpretation of the text? His ready quotation of it served his purpose: it kept "meddlers," as he called them, at arm's length, and secured the links of that grinding slavery which held Sam to his task, and brought money into the till.

It would be a heart-sickening detail, that of the incidental miseries Sam experienced in these six years: suffice it to say, his chain was tightened till it snapped. He contrived to form an acquaintance in Birmingham who advised him to "cut" his tyrant-master, and "cut" him he did. Yet, Mr. Jonas Straitlace knew the value of Sam's earnings too well to be inclined to give up his bird without trying to catch it again. He set out for Birmingham, made inquiry, and learned that Sam, in spite of being minuted by his master's watch, had contrived, almost uniformly, on his errands, to spend a quarter of an hour in a certain low public-house, and that he had done this, habitually, for more than a twelvemonth past. Straitlace bent his steps to this resort, and, by his crafty mode of questioning, ascertained from the landlord that Sam had that very morning been in

his house with one "Jinks," — yet that was not the man's right name, the landlord added, but only a name he went by.

"And pray who is this Jinks?" asked Straitlace.

He was once a man in great trust, sir," answered the landlord, with some solemnity: "he was head clerk in a first-rate lawyers's office in this town. But it was found out at last, that Jinks had 'bezzled a good deal o' money belonging to the firm; and so he was sent to gaol for a couple o' year; nay, he was very near being hanged. And so when he came out o' limbo, you understand, why nobody would trust, or hardly look on him; and he's now got from bad to worse."

"What mean you by that?" asked Jonas.

"The least said is the soonest mended," replied the landlord.

"I wish you could tell me where I could see this man," said Straitlace: "the lad is my apprentice, and this man will do him no good: besides, I am losing money by his absence."

The landlord stared, bit his lip, with a look that told he wished he had not talked so fast, and then made answer that he was busy that morning, and, besides, it was ten thousand to one whether Jinks could be found in his hiding-hole, if they were to go to it: — "and, more than all," he added, "there is no believing him, he is such a fellow to thump: he tells so many lies, poking his eyes into every

corner, and never looking in your face all the while, that I often think Jinks must find it hard to invent new ones."

Straitlace was versed sufficiently in human character to discern that the prattling landlord was made of squeezable materials, and so he urged his questions and entreaties until he had won his point, and the landlord undertook to conduct him to "Jinks's hiding hole."

Threading an alley in one of the dingiest streets in the town, they wound through several crooked passages, and arrived at a paltry-looking small square. From a corner of this dirty and half-ruined quadrangle, the landlord advanced along a path that could scarcely be supposed to lead to a human dwelling. It was what is designated a "twitchel" in the midland counties, being barely wide enough to admit one person at a time, — and was the boundary line of two rows of buildings, the eaves of which overhung it, and rendered the passage as gloomy as if it were scarcely yet twilight. Straitlace scrambled with difficulty after his conductor, and over the heaps of cinders, broken pots, and oyster and muscle shells which lay along this dark tract; and when they came to the end of it, and had descended half-a-dozen stone steps, they arrived at what looked like the door of a cellar. Here the landlord shook his fist at Straitlace, and compressed his features, as a signal for his companion to keep strict silence. He

then tapped, very gently, at the door; but, though he repeated his timid knock, no one answered.

"Jinks! Jinks! I say," he whispered through the key-hole, after he had knocked the third time.

"Who's there?" said a sharp, angry voice.

"It's only me, Jinks:—I want to speak t' ye," answered the landlord.

"You lie, Jemmy Jolter:—there's more than you only," retorted Jinks, with a snarl so sudden and crabbed that it flung the other entirely off his guard.

"Well—but—but," Jemmy stammered; "this person wants to see you about that youth that was with you this morning, Jinks, and—— "

"Whew! Jemmy Jolter, you've let it out again," replied the strange voice within: "get home, ye long-tongued fool, get home! what fool is that beside ye to employ such a sieve to carry water?"

"Oh, very well, Jinks," said the weak landlord, turning round in dudgeon: "a time may come when you may want a good turn doing, you know."

"I'll let you in, by yourself, Jemmy, if you like," said the keeper of this questionable garrison, fearful of losing the good offices of the landlord; "or I'll admit that verjuice-faced fellow who stands beside you, with the white apron round him."

The outer party here looked at each other with some alarm, on finding they were each seen so plainly by one who was to them invisible.

"You don't think I shall advise a respectable man and a stranger to come into such a den as yours, alone, — do ye, Jinks?" said the other, in a voice of displeasure.

"Then you may both keep out," retorted the concealed speaker; "at any rate, you'll both be safe there. Twist my withers, if ever I admit two clients into chambers at once! No, no! it wouldn't do, Jemmy! What I say here goes into only one pair of ears besides my own."

"I'll venture alone, if he'll only admit me," said Straitlace, his eagerness to learn something of Sam, and, if possible, to recover the possession of him, subduing the repugnance he felt against trusting himself alone in such suspicious company.

The door was slightly opened in a moment; and before the landlord could remonstrate, Straitlace was admitted, and the bolts were again closed within. Jinks seized his visitor by the hand, and rapidly pulled him up a dark stair. Straitlace's mind misgave him, as he reached the top of the ascent: it conducted to a narrow apartment in which there was no furniture but a broken chair, and a strong wooden bench; while a bottle, and an earthen pot, with some discoloured papers, covered the end of a barrel which appeared to serve the wretched habitant of the room for a table. There was no fire in the dirty grate, and viewed through the murky light admitted by the small window which was half-obscured with papers,

patching the broken panes, the appearance of the squalid chamber sent a shuddering feeling over Straitlace's skin.

"Well, and so now you are admitted to my *sanctum sanctorum*, — what's your will?" asked Jinks, with a grin of derision, and seating himself on the broken chair.

Straitlace was not a timid man; but the dark skin, projecting teeth, and overhanging brows of the figure before him, and, more than all, the diabolical fire of his eyes, really affrighted him, and he remained speechless.

"Don't stare at me in that way, you fool," said the grim figure, savagely; "I'm not a wizard, though I do deal with the devil sometimes. What d'ye want to know about Sam Simkins?"

Straitlace was amazed at the effrontery of the fellow, in turn: "I insist upon it, that you tell me where he is, since you seem to know," he said, his displeasure giving him a little spirit.

"Whew!" was the only answer made by the grim figure, who turned the empty pot towards the light, and then looked into it, and then looked at Straitlace, who was 'born sooner than yesterday,' as they say in the midlands; but who was not disposed to show that he penetrated the meaning of the spunger's masonic sort of hint.

"I insist upon knowing where you have concealed

my apprentice," said Straitlace, trying to put on a bold look.

"I've neither concealed him, nor shall I snitch, and tell you where he is, if you ape the bully," replied Jinks, with cold mockery.

"Then, as sure as you sit there, you villain," answered Straitlace, thinking he should lose the end of his errand entirely, if he did not keep up the appearance of determination, "I'll have you before a magistrate, and imprison you till the boy is produced."

"I advise you to be cool," answered Jinks, with a look of such peculiar devilry that it made Straitlace feel chill with fear: "you wouldn't get me before a magistrate if you were to try. And, besides, there's more than one can light a match; and your cottage will burn, you know,—ay, and your collars and old saddle traps too."

Straitlace dared not threaten now; he found that the fellow knew him; and he felt the peril of the ground he stood on. He sank on the bench, and gazed timidly and silently at the broken-down lawyer's clerk, who evidently enjoyed his triumph.

"You're cooler, I see," resumed Jinks, and then looked into the earthen pot again.

"I don't mind a trifle, by way of recompense," said Straitlace, torturing his tongue to frame the words, "if you'll only assist me in recovering my apprentice."

"Raythe sensible that," answered Jinks tauntingly; but still looked into the empty pot.

Straitlace overcame his own master-passion for the instant, and placed a half-crown beside the empty drinking cup; but Jinks instantly pushed it off the barrel, into the floor, in contempt. Straitlace felt the blood rush to his neck and face, but once more struggled with his own reluctance, took up the half-crown, and laid down a half-sovereign in its stead.

"Sensible, — very!" observed Jinks, slowly; and then suddenly starting up, said, "Now, *Mister* Jonas Straitlace, what will you give to have this stray dog of yours put quietly into your hands, muzzled and collared, so that you may take him home safely?"

"Isn't that enough?" said the other leeringly.

"Two whole sovereigns into my hands to-morrow morning at seven, — here, — at the bottom of the steps, — and you have him. Otherwise, there's your road, Mister Jonas Straitlace," returned Jinks, and pointed to the stairs.

The saddler saw he was in a most disadvantageous position for making a choice, and hesitated.

"I've other clients, and have no time to fool away upon you," rejoined Jinks: "speak the word! yes or no," and moved towards the steps.

"Then I'll be here at that time," answered Straitlace, with a mental reservation; and he had scarcely uttered the words when three knocks were distinctly

given under his feet; but Jinks seized his hand, hurried him down the steps, and thrust him out, and bolted the door behind him, with a strength and speed that caused him to turn round and stare at the closed door with wonder, when he stood once more in the twitchel.

The landlord seized his arm, and recalled him to the remembrance of where he was. Straitlace evaded the landlord's inquiries as to the result of his errand, persuaded that he could best carry into effect the scheme which had suggested itself to him, with other aid than that of a person who appeared to have some connection with Jinks. He marked the way to the door, and paid particular observance to the passages, and to the exact locality of the street, and thanking the landlord for his trouble, took his way home, somewhat to the surprise of the landlord himself, who had expected he would return to the public-house.

On the night succeeding the morning in which Straitlace had been admitted to that squalid chamber, the narrow space itself was changed into a hold of guilty riot and thievish conspiracy. The fumes of tobacco which filled the room would have rendered respiration impossible to any but the actual participators in that scene of infamy; the fog of smoke being so dense that the human beings there assembled seemed to be kneaded into the thick vapour rather than surrounded by it. The struggling flames of a

fire which had just been kindled, and was covered by a huge iron vessel, nearly choked up the draught of the narrow chimney, and threw an uncertain light upon the figures which nearly filled the narrow room. The singular being who was the habitual tenant of the chamber sat in his broken chair close by the fire, augmenting the gross sociality of his associates by the vehemence with which he consumed tobacco in a wooden pipe; but adding not a word to their busy conversation. A strong coarse-looking woman, crouched immediately before the fire, was alternately attempting to clear a passage for its progress, and slicing onions from her apron to put into the caldron. Her short clay pipe, with the filthy black cup scarcely protruding beyond her nose, showed her attachment to the favourite excitement of her depraved companions. Behind her stood the barrel, before described as the only substitute for a table in Jinks's room, and upon the end of it was placed a large metal jug of spirits, which the various members of the group lifted to their lips, by turns, as inclination moved them.

The confused conversation was suspended in a moment by three distinct and measured raps being given at the door below; and Jinks jumped up, exclaiming, "That's the young'un I told you of: I'll let him in." And he darted down the steps, unbolted the door, pulled in Sam Simkins, and, in the lapse of scarcely three minutes, introduced him to the villainous com-

pany. The fellows gazed at Sam, and one swore that he only looked like a starved rat, and another said he was more like a stunted badger; but all agreed that he looked likely to be useful, for he had a hawk's eye in his head. Sam felt somewhat loutish at the unrestrained gaze of the thieves; but Jinks placed him upon the bench next his own chair, chucked him under the chin, and holding the metal jug to his mouth, told him to drink. Sam did drink a little, and thought the draught scorched his throat; yet in a few minutes he felt a flow of spirits that completely banished his bashfulness.

"And so you've cut the starve-gut rascal, eh, young'un?" said an impudent-looking fellow who sat on the farther end of the bench, and who was, at once, the most frequent visitor to the jug, and the most eager talker in the villainous conclave.

"What the devil was he to do else?" said Jinks, seeming to wish to keep off from the lad the assailment of questions by the gang: "was he to stay and be pined outright?—Bess," he continued, addressing the woman, "isn't the stuff ready?"

"The can's empty," said the fellow who had just spoken, interrupting Jinks: "we'll have it filled again."

"Not to-night," said Jinks, with an oath.

"Not to-night!—why not, old hang-dog, and be d—d to ye?" asked the other, dropping his pipe, and looking as if he would fell his opposer.

"Because there's a job on hand that requires cool brains, ye guzzling ape!" answered Jinks, in a tone which showed he was not to be frightened by the bully, his brother in roguery. "Wide-mouthed Bob will be here directly, and we must then prepare for business."

"What the devil can he be about to be so late?" cried the woman, who was still squatted before the fire: "the broth's ready, and I shall pour it out if he doesn't come in a crack. Hark!" she said,—and the quarrelsome crew were silent:—"there he is!"

Jinks started from his broken chair at the sound of a whistle, hurried down the steps, and was speedily in his old position again, while the new comer was welcomed with shouts of "Give us your hand, captain!—success to ye!"

"Silence, you fools!" said he who was thus saluted: "d'ye mean to bring the bull-dogs upon us?" And he took up the jug, but finding it empty, he looked discontented. Jinks, however, seized the jug, removed the barrel from the spot on which it stood, pulled up a trap-door, and descended, and then returned with the jug refilled, with the usual rapidity that characterised his movements.

"Ay, ay, you know who's come now, old juggler," said the bully, tauntingly, to Jinks as he again appeared from the subterraneous room, with the vessel full of brandy.

"Yes, and I know that they have a right to the

sugar-candy that are the first to put their fingers into the fire to get it," said Jinks, showing his ugly teeth very forbiddingly; "and not every skinking coward that ties his neck to his heels to save it when there's work to be done."

The bully returned no answer, seeming conscious that his cowardice deserved the rebuke.

"Get the supper-tools out, Jinks," said the woman, and took the boiling caldron from the fire.

Jinks climbed upon his chair, and reaching down a large wooden bowl, from its concealment in the ceiling of the room, placed it upon the end of the barrel, and sat down again.

"Why, you old brute, do ye think we are going to pig it all out of one trough, on a night like this?" exclaimed the woman, pouring out the stew into the bowl: — "reach every man his pap-spoon and dish, or I'll spoil your grinding before you begin!" and she aimed a blow, with a brazen ladle, at Jinks's scalp, which he evaded, and reached forth a set of basins and spoons from the same strange repository.

The steamy flavour of Bess's cookery speedily attracted the appetites of her companions. Limbs of fowls and game, mingled with the soup, showed the illicit source from which such a company had obtained the raw provisions for the meal. Bess poured out half a basin of the stew first, for the individual who was called "captain," and filling up the vessel with brandy from the jug, handed it to the leader,

with a coarse coaxing smile. She then served the rest, in the order they sat, beginning with Jinks, and not forgetting the lad. Sam smacked his lips at such a treat, and congratulated himself on having taken the advice of Jinks, and run away from his master. He soon disposed of the contents of his basin; and then felt strongly attracted to notice the appearance and behaviour of him whom the thieves acknowledged as their principal.

The personal appearance of Wide-mouthed Bob rendered the dependence of the crew upon his presence and enterprise, Sam thought, a matter of no wonder. His stature was full six feet, and the great breadth of his chest and shoulders, and extreme length of his arms, terminated by hands of monstrous size, gave demonstrations of unusual physical power. The width of his mouth was the most striking feature in his face, and had procured for him the common nickname by which Jinks had first mentioned him during the evening. The forbidding glance of his large eyes, from under a low forehead, and brows as shaggy as if they pertained to an ass's colt, with the bull-dog shape of his head, at the sides, causing his ears to stand forward after a form scarcely human, were also peculiarities in the features of the captain-burglar.

His third basin being despatched by this powerful animal, for such his peculiarity of frame seemed to warrant his being termed, the conversation took a

turn for business. Robberies of a cheese warehouse, a flour shop, a liquor vault, and even of the subterranean workshop of a "smasher," or maker and vender of false coin, were planned. The only debate was, which was to be undertaken first; and as there was some difficulty in settling this point, the captain called for the jug to be replenished. Jinks descended once more, but returned with only half the vessel full, and, setting it down, declared the barrel below was empty.

"Then that determines the point," observed Wide-mouthed Bob: "we must make our way direct to the brandy cellar."

The gang immediately assented, — the liquor was shared; and in a few minutes, all, save Jinks, and the woman, and the lad, descended by the stairs, and departed on their lawless enterprise.

Sam Simkins had fallen asleep some time before the departure of the gang, but was awaked by Jinks, as soon as he had bolted the door and re-ascended the steps, to receive his first wholesale lesson in villainy. The lad felt the lesson very unwelcome to his nature, at the beginning; but the remembrance of the horrors from which he had escaped, and the promise and prospect of a wild freedom, and a continuance of the good fare he had met among the thieves, soon subdued the inward whisper that he was going wrong. Jinks and the woman were most successful

in their schooling of Sam, while they dwelt upon his master's conduct towards him: —

"But did the nigger-driver never let you play a bit, Sam?" asked the woman: "you say you always dropped work at eight, and went to bed at ten: — what did ye in the two hours, my lad?"

"I used to read Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophet-books in the Bible, and Romans, and Corinthians, and them ere parts of the Testament," answered Sam: "mester would na let me read owt else, unless I managed to do it slily."

"And what did ye think to what you read, Sam?" asked Jinks, suddenly dropping his pipe, and looking at the lad with an air of new interest.

"He, he!" snivelled the lad, and twisted his thumbs with a loutish look,—"I could na make owt on 'em!"

"How the devil were ye likely?" said Jinks: "that Paul would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, for he was a devilish long-headed fellow, and no mistake; as for Jeremiah, and the rest of 'em, I know little about 'em; but it was an ugly slavish way of using you, my lad, — you'll find the difference now. All that you have to do is to mind your P's and Q's, and I'll warrant ye, it'll be a merry life for ye."

The lad snivelled again, and felt wonderfully pleased.

"Now hark ye, Sam," continued Jinks, "who

had your master in the house, besides himself and you?"

"The missus," answered Sam; "but hur never taks no notice o' nowt, hur's ower deeaf."

"Capital!" exclaimed Jinks, cracking his thumb and finger; and then the lad received instruction as to his first grand act of villainy, and while he was receiving it, Bess prepared the caldron, once more.

Three hours elapsed, and the whistle of Wide-mouthed Bob was heard again. Jinks performed his porter's office as before, and the captain and three others of the gang speedily tugged up the stairs a couple of kegs of liquor, which were as speedily concealed in the subterranean room.

"Where's the rest o' the birds?" asked the woman.

"Sent 'em home to roost," replied the captain; "and now you and all of us must cut, old girl, and leave Jinks to his cage."

"But not before we've tasted the new broach," said the woman.

"No more tasting of it, this morning," anwered Bob; "we shall soon be blown, if we carry on that game: we'll have breakfast and go."

The word of the leader was law. The stew was again poured up; and when it was devoured, Sam having his share as before, the chief burglar, and the other three thieves, with the woman, departed; and Sam Simkins also set out on the errand for which Jinks had lately bestowed instruction upon him.

At eight the following morning, Mr. Jonas Straitlace appeared in the twitchel, as before, and summoned the attention of Jinks by a bold rap. Jinks was speedily at the door, and Straitlace was again admitted into the thievish head-quarters.

"Now for the chink!" said the broken-down lawyer.

"But where's the lad?" asked Straitlace.

"The moment you down with the dust, that moment I tell you where he is, safe and sound, and nearer home than you think of; so that you'll have very little trouble to seek him," answered Jinks.

"When I find the lad I'll pay you," said the saddler; "you may be deceiving me."

"Why, d—n it!" said Jinks, "what d'ye take me for? — let that sneaking fellow, who stands squeezed up in the corner there below, be witness between us."

Straitlace turned pale; but Jinks was at the bottom of the stair in a moment, and again ascended, bringing up a man dressed in a thick top coat that covered his under dress.

"Now, let this constable be witness between us," said Jinks: "he's a respectable man, and you could not have brought a better man with you."

Straitlace was amazed; — but he summoned resolution, and said, "Constable, I insist upon your taking this man into custody, for having either decoyed away from me, or concealed, or harboured, my runaway 'prentice."

The constable put on a very stupid look, and answered,—"Why, as to that, I've no proof of any part of it, you know, and I decline to interfere."

Straitlace felt confounded at the fact of his own man, as he had deemed the constable, deserting him, and stood staring in amazement.

"Now, Mister Jonas Straitlace," said Jinks, "I'd have you to remember that I don't give professional advice for nought, any more than other lawyers. You came here to ask my help and instruction, and I engaged to give it you for two sovereigns: pay me that down, and I undertake that you shall find your apprentice at home when you return."

The saddler felt enraged at the villain's impudence, but the constable was against him:—"If you made that bargain you had better keep it," said the functionary, "and if this man breaks it, then I shall be witness to it." And Straitlace felt he was so awkwardly fixed in that suspicious place, and between the two, that he gave Jinks the two sovereigns. Had he kept a strict watch upon the motions of the constable and Jinks he would have seen them share the booty, ere they hurried down the stair.

Straitlace reached home, and found that Sam had returned, but was again departed. His deaf wife could only tell that she had scolded him, and made him get to work in the shop without his breakfast; but she did not know when he went off again. The condition of the "till," in the shop, fully proclaimed

the way in which Sam had employed himself during his brief stay. It had been forcibly wrested from its place, though strongly fixed, and robbed of its contents, which were not great, but were sufficient to destroy, by their loss, the peace of Mr. Straitlace's spiritual mind for many a day after.

Straitlace sat down to his work instead of going again in search of Sam Simkins. Of what value would a thief be to me? was one question he asked himself; and—shall I spend in law, to prosecute him, more money than I have thrown away already? was another. A few days after, he met the constable in Birmingham, and related his disaster. "You act wisest to keep quiet," said the constable: "it seems the man kept his word in sending the lad home,—so that I don't see how you could have the law of him, there; and as for the young scoundrel, he would do you no good: — good-day, sir."

Straitlace did not know whether there was any soundness in the man's observation about law; but he was loath to spend more money or lose his time,—so he gave Sam up.

The lad returned to Jinks's "hiding-hole," and received great commendations for the clever way in which he had used the "jemmy," or small steel crow-bar, which Jinks had entrusted to him. The robbery of his master's till was his first performance with this crack tool that old gaol-birds chirp so much of; but it was not his last, by many a score. He progressed

in skill till he became the favourite comrade of Wide-mouthed Bob, and the two were the terror of the neighbourhood for years.

It could serve no virtuous purpose to detail his thieveries; and as for the character of the company he kept, the sketch foregoing may suffice to show what it was. He was, at length, sent over-sea for life, in company with the leader and two others of the gang; while Jinks escaped, only to decoy more lads into vice, and train them for the hulks or the gallows; but Mr. Jonas Straitlace, through the grinding of his customers, lost them,—so that he took no more apprentices to train up, in his own peculiar way, for Jinks's second training and perfecting process.

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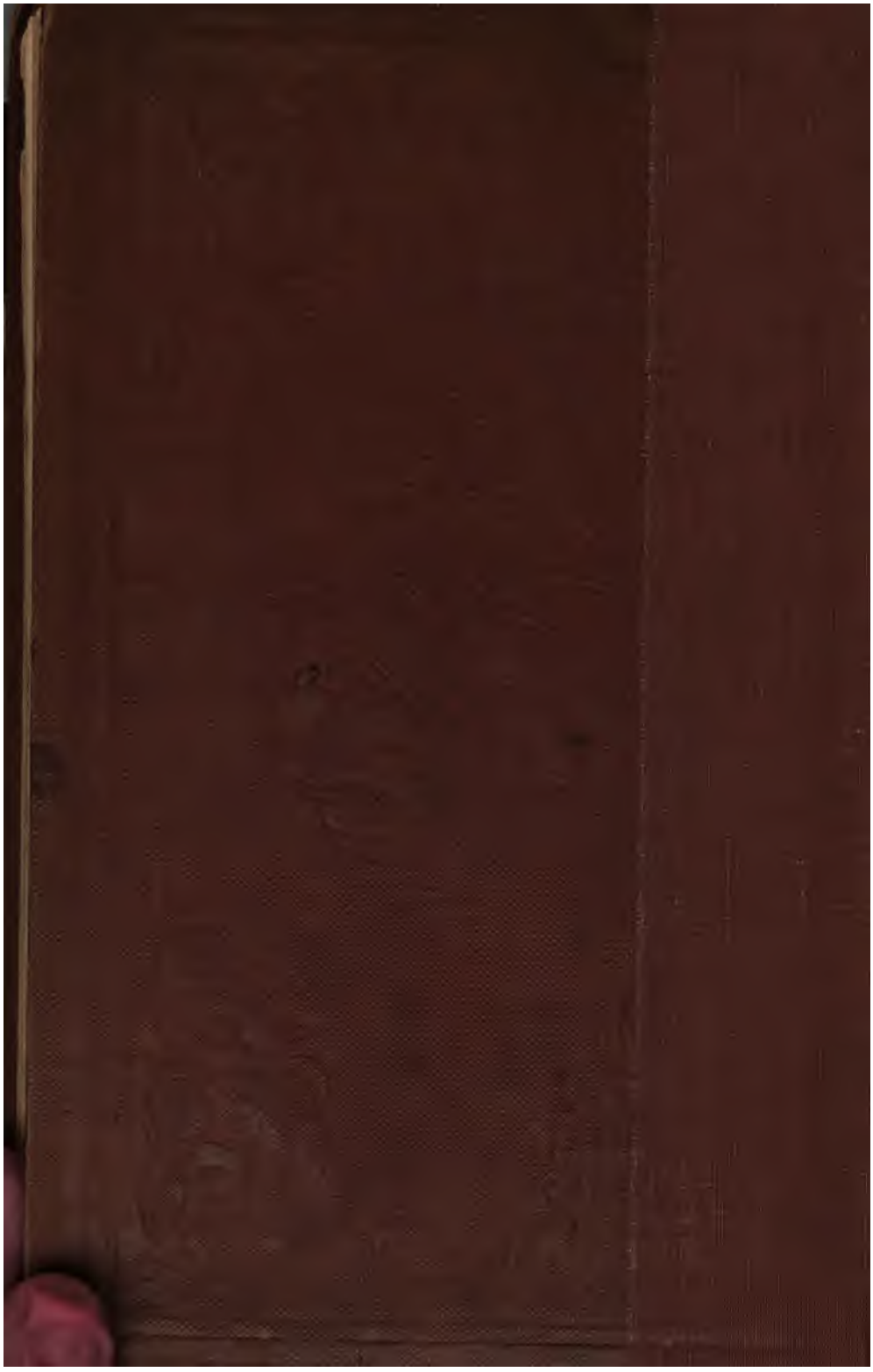
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